

THE *Nation*

VOLUME 148

NEW YORK • SATURDAY • JANUARY 28, 1939

NUMBER 5

CONTENTS

THE SHAPE OF THINGS

105

EDITORIALS:

THE REICH TIGHTENS

108

VERMONT PREFERS FLOODS

108

THE KLUCKHOHN CASE

109

JOB INSURANCE IN PERIL

110

WPA—OR THE DOLE by Robert S. Allen

111

AMERICA IN THE POST-MUNICH WORLD.

I. AMERICA HAS THE POWER

by Eliot Janeway

112

THAT FRANCO-SOVIET PACT

by Genevieve Tabouis

115

MUST DEMOCRACY USE FORCE? II. PEACE
AND THE LIBERAL ILLUSION

by Reinhold Niebuhr

117

STUDY IN RELIEF by McAlister Coleman

119

IN THE WIND

121

ISSUES AND MEN by Oswald Garrison Villard

122

BOOKS AND THE ARTS:

THE PURE IN HEART by Louise Bogan

123

MEDICAL CARE IN BRITAIN by Michael M. Davis

124

CAPITALISM: A DIAGNOSIS by Harold J. Laski

124

PAINTER OF PITTSBURGH by Jerome Mellquist

125

MARXIST HISTORY OF ENGLAND by H. B. Parkes

125

PHILANTHROPIC MONEY by Eduard C. Lindeman

126

SHORTER NOTICES

127

DRAMA: CUCUMBER SANDWICHES

by Joseph Wood Krutch

128

RECORDS by B. H. Haggin

129

Editor and Publisher

FREDA KIRCHWEY

Managing Editor

ROBERT BENDINER

Literary Editor

MARGARET MARSHALL

Associate Editors

KEITH HUTCHISON

MAXWELL S. STEWART

I. F. STONE

Dramatic Critic

JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH

★

Business Manager and Director of Circulation

HUGO VAN ARX

Advertising Manager

MURIEL C. GRAY

The Shape of Things

★

THE MILITARY SITUATION IN CATALONIA, as we go to press, is almost desperate. Rebel forces are reported to be within fifteen miles of Barcelona. Evacuation of civilians is already under way. Although fresh troops have been brought in from the Madrid-Valencia sector, the Loyalists in Catalonia are outnumbered and seriously lacking in munitions. Food supplies, already low, have been further depleted by the sinking of a British ship laden with wheat. But though the situation is critical, it is not hopeless. Madrid has shown that a city can be made into an impregnable fortress so long as communications can be kept open. Barcelona may repeat the demonstration. The refusal of the French government to come to the aid of the republic across the Pyrenees has been met by something closely approximating a revival of the Popular Front. Large numbers of Radical Socialists have joined the Socialists and Communists in an effort to reopen the frontier before it is too late. Victory in this effort would go far toward redeeming Munich. Defeat will be even more disastrous than the betrayal of Czechoslovakia. Surrounded on three sides by hostile dictatorships, the Third Republic may be the next sacrifice on the altar of appeasement.

★

TO AMERICA'S SHAME THE SPANISH EMBARGO has been permitted to remain in force another week though the life of the Spanish republic hangs in the balance. The Senate Foreign Relations Committee has postponed its scheduled consideration of the neutrality legislation. The House Committee, with Chairman McReynolds ill, has not even set a date for hearings on the most crucial matter before the United States today. Once again word is being passed around that it is too late to save Spain. Last May an Administration move to lift the embargo was shelved on the pretext that "Spain could not hold out a month." But as Senator Nye has pointed out, nine months have passed since then and Spain is still holding out. It will still be holding out three months from now, but each week that it is denied aid reduces its chance of ultimate victory. Former Secretary of State Stimson has added the weight of his very great prestige

to the view, frequently expressed in these pages, that the President has the power to lift the embargo with or without Congressional approval. The President's silence becomes more inexplicable daily as it becomes evident that the only groups in the country desiring to keep the embargo are certain sections of the Catholic church. It is estimated that more than 90 per cent of the 1,150,000 Catholics on Long Island have been asked by their parish priests to send letters and telegrams to Washington calling for a retention of the embargo. In each of several churches four or five thousand signatures were collected for petitions supporting the embargo. It is high time for Protestants and Catholics who believe in democracy to exert some influence on our foreign policy.

✱

WHILE SPAIN WAGES ITS LONELY BATTLE for Western democracy, Central Europe is the scene of uninterrupted fascist advance. There is some competitive bidding, of course, but it is between Hitler and Mussolini; this area is virtually their private preserve. Count Csaky goes to Berlin, and Hungary signs on the dotted line, becoming a full-fledged member of the "anti-Comintern" fraternity; Count Ciano is entertained in Belgrade, and Yugoslavia enters into closer relations with the fascist bloc—only six months ago Belgrade crowds were clamoring to march with France against the axis. Although it is too early to know the details, the Belgrade parley apparently contained few surprises. It was interesting chiefly as another symptom of Mussolini's deepening anxiety. For if part of Ciano's mission was to lure Yugoslavia closer to the axis, his most urgent desire was to accomplish this under Italian auspices. It is no secret that German trade with Yugoslavia has steadily increased, and that Nazi agents within Yugoslavia have performed fruitful labors. In Belgrade Ciano continued the Duce's quest for support within the fascist front which would enhance his own bargaining power with the boss in Berlin. Many rivalries are fanning this smoldering conflict, and multiplying the causes of hostility among the countries now being added to the fascist alliance. But there is no alternative for the disgruntled except reluctant submission. Once Hungary and Yugoslavia are safely "coordinated," the likelihood of further Rumanian defiance will be appreciably smaller.

✱

THE IDEA OF ENDING TAX EXEMPTION ON federal and state bonds and salaries has so many powerful supporters that innocent folks may have expected the President's message on the subject to be received with acclaim. Mr. Roosevelt takes the view that the Sixteenth Amendment to the Constitution, permitting taxes on "income from whatever source derived," means exactly what it says. He has therefore suggested to Congress that the practice of tax exemption, having been created by

mere statute, may be ended in the same way. Such a simple approach, however, has been severely castigated by the *New York Times*, the *Wall Street Journal*, and other upright commentators. Certainly, they agree, tax exemption is economically undesirable and should be abolished, but the only decent way to do it is to submit the question to the nation in the form of a constitutional amendment. They do not apparently dispute the obvious meaning of the Sixteenth Amendment; rather they argue that disregard of this meaning has become hallowed by time. This amounts to a claim that the Constitution can be altered by usage—a strange doctrine to be advocated by those who normally are the most fervent defenders of its sanctity. It is difficult not to conclude that many of the President's critics oppose tax exemption only in theory.

✱

ONE OF THE MOST SINISTER ECONOMIC developments in this country since the depression has been the growing tendency to build economic barriers around the different states. The illusion that it is better business to pay the local producer a little more than the "foreigner" demands has led to intrastate favoritism in contracts and even to efforts to bar products of other states by devious means. Thus laws allegedly designed to control plant diseases have been used to prevent shipment of farm products from one state to another. According to Governor Stark of Missouri, who addressed the Council of State Governments on this subject last week, "Under the guise of protection of public health, the encouragement of new industrial development, and sometimes merely as very bald protection of home industry, we of the states have been accused of Balkanizing this formerly great free-trade area. . . . States have definitely prescribed new frontiers for business. Some state legislatures have enacted much legislation concerning special privileges for local interests. In fact, these state barriers constitute a subsidy for organized minorities." We are glad to note that this confession of sins appeared to arouse the general concern of the conference. Such a disruptive movement should be promptly checked. Protagonists of states' rights might consider that efforts to destroy our great internal free-trade market make a poor advertisement for their cause.

✱

FELIX FRANKFURTER WAS ASSOCIATED IN the minds of conservatives with the Sacco-Vanzetti case and the Brain Trust; Frank Murphy with the sitdown strike. Harry L. Hopkins's real crime, despite the charges that he mixed relief with politics, is that he fed the hungry and provided work for the jobless. Yet while Justice Frankfurter was confirmed without opposition in the Senate, and only seven votes were registered against Attorney General Murphy, Mr. Hopkins was subjected to a bombardment of recriminations from the right, and

his confirmation was opposed by twenty-seven Senators, five of them Democrats. So large a vote in opposition is unusual. Even the Republican leadership in the Senate recognized the impropriety of exercising the sort of veto over a nomination to the Cabinet that might be used in the case of a Supreme Court justice. That Secretary of Commerce Hopkins should have evoked more bitterness than either Mr. Frankfurter or Mr. Murphy does not throw too complimentary a light on the attitude of American conservatives. Though they dare not cut too far, those on the right seem to resent relief and WPA. The feeling still persists that relief has been used as a sort of gigantic pork barrel to obtain the votes of the underprivileged. WPA and politics have been linked in several states, but there has been no evidence whatsoever to connect Hopkins with improper practices.

✱

HOMER MARTIN, UNSTABLE PRESIDENT OF the unstable United Automobile Workers, is now accused by his executive board of conspiring with Henry Ford to disrupt the union and start a secession movement. Shocking as this indictment is, it comes with no startling suddenness. As long ago as last November the C. I. O. convention at Pittsburgh seethed with rumors. Not even the ardent protestations of solidarity from the auto delegates or Martin's pledges of loyalty to the C. I. O. could smother suspicions that the problem union was about to break out in a new adventure. Then the great question was whether Martin's enemies were spreading the story of the Ford conspiracy as groundwork for a coming coup or whether the story was true and was being confined to the grapevine in the hope that Martin could be controlled and the Ford campaign taken out of his hands before he did any harm. The answer to that question still is not known with finality, but the case for Martin is none too convincing. He admits that the voluntary dissolution of Ford's company union, the Liberty Legion, is a result of his negotiations with Harry Bennett. If the terms of the deal were open and aboveboard, it might well prove a downy feather in the Martin cap, but nobody knows the price Martin paid—and he won't talk. If that seems autocratic, it is normal trade-union procedure compared to what has followed. In another of his off-with-their-heads moods, Martin suddenly suspended fifteen of the twenty-four members of his executive board, locked them out of union headquarters, and removed all the records to his own hotel. Violence and impeachment followed, and it now seems inevitable that there will be two conventions of automobile workers in March. This is the saddest thing that has happened to the C. I. O. since its creation, not excluding the exit of the I. L. G. W. U. Once organized labor begins dividing in this fashion it may look forward to attaining not only the amoeba's reproductive capacity but its influence as well.

DO REACTIONARY AMERICAN CATHOLICS subscribe to a common bureau of misinformation with the Nazis? We raise the question once more because we have again discovered a remarkable parallelism in their utterances. In its issue of December 24 the *Brooklyn Tablet*, a Catholic weekly whose statements closely resemble Father Coughlin's, savagely attacked President Roosevelt for his reported desire to lift the Spanish embargo. A long passage ascribed this desire to the President's alleged connections with the Masons—a deft bit of detective work—citing a number of Masonic groups with which he was supposed to be identified and a long congratulatory message sent to him by numerous Masonic lodges after he had denounced aggressor nations in an address at the pan-American conference of 1936. All these sinister disclosures seemed pretty hysterical and irrelevant, in the best *Tablet* tradition. More interesting is the fact that almost exactly the same passage had appeared in an article, also denouncing Mr. Roosevelt, published in the December issue of the *Flammenzeichen*, a Nazi paper published in Stuttgart. Except for a few minor discrepancies the passages are identical in wording and sequence. These word-for-word parallels—this is the third—are not psychic phenomena; and they become even more striking when the *Tablet*, directly beneath the passage mentioned above, publishes a protest against the persecution of Catholics in Germany. We think that the *Tablet* ought to explain. So, incidentally, should Father Coughlin, whose silence in the face of similar challenges has been deafening.

✱

WE NOT INFREQUENTLY READ OF FREE citizens of these United States who commit some petty crime for the sole purpose of getting into jail, knowing that there, at least, they will find food and shelter. In Europe in the last few years we have seen the inhabitants of whole countries submit to servitude for similar reasons. We may shout bravely, "It can't happen here," and protest that our democracy is proof against dictatorship. But if it is to remain so, we must put our house in order, guarding it not only against external aggression but internal decay. The series of articles by Eliot Janeway which begins in this issue provides an analysis of our position in a world where the fascist tide is running strongly, and suggests means both for checking the menace of foreign aggression and for reconstructing our economy on democratic lines. Mr. Janeway, of course, speaks for himself. With parts of his diagnosis and with some of his remedies *The Nation* disagrees for reasons which will be advanced in later issues. Nevertheless, we feel that the wealth of facts marshaled in this series, together with the provocative manner in which they are interpreted, makes a real contribution to the most vital debate of our time.

The Reich Tightens

HITLER'S two latest moves strike at the only remaining institutions in Germany which had not been completely integrated with the Nazi machine—the Reichsbank and the army. Both indicate a heightening of tension, economic and moral, within the Third Reich.

Dr. Schacht's removal from the Reichsbank hardly comes as a surprise. During his tenure he rendered enormous services to the regime both by his versatility as a financial manipulator and by his willingness to act as a respectable front to impress foreign bankers. But he emptied his hat of economic rabbits some time ago, and he was unwilling to resort to the final trick—the release of the inflationary hare. As a last effort to hang on to office he revived and refurbished his famous ransom plan. The intention was to provide refugees with a little of their own money in return for a great deal of foreign exchange and the destruction of the boycott. This scheme was too palpably fraudulent even for the London bankers, and when it became clear that negotiations would be unfruitful, Dr. Schacht was unceremoniously dropped.

The installation of Dr. Funk in his place places the Reichsbank at the full disposal of the Nazi government, but it does nothing to diminish the severity of the economic crisis. Last year's trade figures just published show that the credit balance of 413,000,000 marks achieved in 1937 has been replaced by a deficit of 432,400,000 marks. With sources of invisible income, such as shipping and tourist traffic, known to have shrunk, a heavy draft on meager foreign-exchange reserves must have been necessary. With exports still falling, imports must also be curtailed. But food rations cannot be cut down much farther, and smaller purchases of raw materials will react unfavorably both on the armament program and on manufacturing for export. One possible economy is repudiation of all foreign-debt payments, but this would upset the trade agreement with Britain, which provides one of the few remaining sources of free foreign exchange.

The internal fiscal situation is equally unhappy. Since Hitler came to power German national income has risen some 69 per cent, but tax collections have more than doubled and the public debt has nearly tripled. Last spring Dr. Schacht, aware that with productive capacity and labor fully employed further issues of capital-creating bills must mean inflation, attempted the substitution of long-term public loans. To some extent this method was adopted, but the exigencies of the September crisis caused not only a return to bill financing but a sharp rise in currency circulation. Several long-term loans have also been issued, but the latest was only partially taken up by the public.

In this situation Dr. Funk has three methods from

which to choose. He can increase taxation, thus cutting down expenditure on consumption goods and releasing productive capacity for capital goods, including armaments. Taxation of the rich, however, is said to have reached the point of diminishing returns, while further burdens on the workers are opposed by the radical Nazis. Another possibility would be to cut down armament expenditure, but this would necessitate a relaxation of aggressive diplomacy. The third choice is to maintain superpressure on the economic engine by firing it with uncovered paper money—in other words, pure inflation. The danger of bursting the boiler by this method is obvious even to Hitler, who has instructed Funk to safeguard "the absolute stability of wages and prices."

Confronted with such slippery fiscal alternatives, the German government will be strongly tempted to take another running jump into foreign adventure. However successful, this could hardly prove a cure for economic troubles any more than did Anschluss or the conquest of Sudetenland. Moreover, there are signs of deteriorating morale within the Reich. For six years Germans have been kept at emotional fever heat. Ever under patriotic pressure, forced to work harder for small returns, their every moment organized, it would be hardly surprising if they showed resistance to new stimulants, faltered in their "spontaneity." The return of the Storm Troopers to the forefront of the Nazi movement and to closer connection with the army is perhaps an effort to tighten control and combat moral lassitude. It vindicates Captain Röhm, who died attempting to achieve this very object; whether it will provide even a temporary solution for Nazi difficulties is questionable.

Vermont Prefers Floods

THE issue of states' rights has become a favorite euphemism of American politics, a high-sounding cover-up for purposes that would command little respect in the nude. Its use in the current controversy over flood control between the governors of New England and the New Deal runs true to form, though states' rights have rarely been surrounded with as much emotionalism and hollow bombast. Governor Aiken's recent message to the special session of the Vermont Legislature on flood control might lead one to believe that he was talking not from Montpelier but from Barcelona. "It is now put squarely up to us Vermonters to decide what we want," he said. "We can submit meekly, surrendering resource after resource until we are no longer self-supporting and free . . . We can fight or we can run." The terms in which he asked an appropriation to test the constitutionality of certain provisions in the Flood-Control Act of 1938 would have come more appropriately from the late Jefferson Davis. Governor Aiken said he

wanted funds "for the defense of our sovereign rights—to the end that this injustice to us and our descendants be forever prevented." One almost expected the address to close with a ringing call for secession.

It is no secret that Governor Aiken has his eye on the White House and hopes that Vermont, the tail of the 1936 election, may wag the dog in 1940. He will have to get himself a more convincing battle cry. The immediate issue between him and the federal government is whether the Barkley amendment to the Flood-Control Act is constitutional. It authorizes the federal government to condemn land for flood-control purposes without the permission of the state in which the land is situated. We see no reason why the government cannot constitutionally do so. Its authority to engage in flood control is based on its power over navigable streams; its power over navigable streams was drawn by the ingenious Marshall from the vague confines of a clause permitting Congress "to regulate commerce . . . among the several states." If the power to regulate commerce includes control of navigable streams, if control of navigable streams permits the building of dams to prevent floods, if from flood-prevention dams the federal government may produce and sell power, it requires no great stretch of the imagination to believe that the condemnation of land for the erection of the dams is also constitutional. But behind this legalistic battle lies a more vital issue—the determination of New England power interests to keep the federal government from producing power in that area.

When the thirteenth New England Conference met in Boston last November with the six governors of New England attending, its chief concern was not to prevent a repetition of the floods that caused \$53,000,000 in property damage along the Connecticut and Merrimac rivers in 1936. Of the five items on the agenda of the conference, attention was focused on two: "To meet the issue of federal vs. state control of our rivers and streams . . ."; and "To meet the issue raised by the proposed incorporation of New England in an Atlantic seaboard 'TVA'. . . ." Congressman Rankin had brought the nebulous states' rights question down to an even more concrete basis at the preceding session of Congress when he showed that if New England power consumers had paid TVA rates they would have saved \$86,500,000 in 1936. Those of our readers who have been puzzled by the rhetoric issuing from New England on flood control are referred to a pamphlet by Judson King of the National Popular Government League in Washington, "Why the Power Joker in the New England Flood-Control Compacts?" Mr. King's exhaustive investigation reveals the power attorneys and lobbyists who have been the moving figures in what is actually a well-planned campaign to nullify the Federal Water-Power Act of 1920, which abolished state rights over power sources. The first step toward undermining the policies embodied

in this act was taken in the Flood-Control Act of 1936, which was carefully framed by the late Senator Copeland and army engineers to provide for flood control only. The second step was the New England flood-control interstate compact of 1937, which Congress properly rejected because under it each state reserved the right "at its option at any time hereafter by itself *or through such agents as it may designate*" to develop power at the dams which the federal government proposed to build according to its \$22,000,000 flood-control program for New England. The third step is the present effort to maintain a state veto over flood control—and possible power production—by denying the federal government the right to condemn land for the erection of dams. For at the dams the federal government may produce cheap power, and New England's governors prefer floods.

The Kluckhohn Case

THE Mexican government has committed a serious blunder by its expulsion of Frank L. Kluckhohn, correspondent of the *New York Times*. In recent years the deportation of foreign journalists whose views did not coincide with those of the rulers of the countries to which they were assigned has been characteristic chiefly of fascist Italy and Germany. The Cárdenas administration does itself an injustice by descending to that level. With all due recognition of the fact that in Mr. Kluckhohn's case the provocation was great, it would have been the part of wisdom to have put up with his hostile and misleading dispatches rather than be classed with the oversensitive fascist tyrannies.

Mr. Kluckhohn now claims that an example was made of him as a warning to the other foreign correspondents stationed in Mexico because he "knew too much" about Mexico's barter petroleum arrangements with the Third Reich. This is childish on the face of it. If he really "knew" more than he has already printed, his deportation will certainly not prevent him from making that knowledge public. Even assuming that he was formerly gagged by the "control" of the press about which he has frequently written, it is the Mexican government itself which has now removed the gag; if the object was to silence him, this seems a very curious way of going about it. As for the other correspondents, there appears to be no evidence that Mexico has subjected them to any pressure or made demands other than that they observe an elementary respect for the facts.

The main burden of Mr. Kluckhohn's writing about Mexico in recent months has been the alleged increase of Nazi influence on the Mexican government as a result of the oil deals. It is true that an increase of trade between a dependent country like Mexico and an aggressively imperialist nation like Germany is bound to be accom-

panied by a corresponding growth of the latter's influence. It may well be doubted, however, that this process, deplorable as it is, has gone as far as Mr. Kluckhohn suggests. The fact is that Mexico continues to be the only country outside the Soviet Union which faithfully complies with the obligations due the Spanish Republic under every concept of international law and common decency; that Mexico is even now arranging to grant asylum to 1,200 members of the International Brigade of anti-fascist volunteers whom democratic France has refused to admit; that in the League of Nations Mexico's voice has been one of the few raised in defense of the rights of weak nations victimized by fascist aggression; and that the Mexican government has consistently gone out of its way to demonstrate its profound opposition to fascism.

If the United States is concerned over the increase of German trade with Mexico, the remedy lies ready to hand. President Cárdenas has repeatedly affirmed his country's preference to sell oil to the democratic nations. But while the United States and Great Britain, through their international oil oligarchies, have combined to impose a boycott against Mexico, the Nazis, pursuing their own advantage, have bought Mexican petroleum and helped the country to weather a difficult economic and political crisis. Under the circumstances, it would have been sheer insanity for Mexico to refuse German orders on the ground that they were motivated by ulterior purposes.

Job Insurance in Peril

QUIETLY, without the knowledge of the general public, the basic standards of unemployment insurance in New York are being threatened by employer interests. The threat is particularly serious because of the glaring defects in the law as it now stands. A very large proportion of the state's unemployment payments during 1938 were delayed for weeks. At the end of the year some 13 per cent of the total claims were still unpaid. At the same time some workers received much larger benefits than they were entitled to, and a number got several checks covering the same week's benefit.

Under the guise of simplification, F. B. Cliffe of the General Electric Company presented a program to the Interstate Conference of State Unemployment Compensation Agencies which has met with such wide favor among business groups that it might almost be called the employers' plan. It would make six basic changes in the New York law. Some of these, such as the establishment of wage classifications, are desirable. The majority, however, are definitely reactionary and represent a serious threat to the jobless of New York State. Should they be adopted in the form proposed, it is estimated that the average benefit will be 15 to 20 per cent

lower than at present. The proposal to use annual earnings as a basis for calculating benefits instead of full-time weekly wages is particularly open to objection. As a plan it has never been favored by the Social Security Board. Full-time wages bear a definite relationship to a worker's living standard; annual earnings reflect the degree of his insecurity. The change would bear most heavily on wage-earners in seasonal occupations, who are also the ones who suffer the most severely from unemployment. Few workers know their annual wage; they would therefore be in no position to check the benefits given them by the state. This last is an important point because of the extraordinary number of errors made under the state's mechanized system of record-keeping.

Equally indefensible is the proposal to levy a 1 per cent tax on workers' wages. Since workers are in no way responsible for the insecurity of our present-day economic system, it would be highly ironical to impose upon them the cost of alleviating this insecurity. Already they bear a considerable part of the burden indirectly, since pay-roll taxes tend to be passed on in the form of increased prices or reduced wages. Several of the states which originally required employee contributions have withdrawn them as a result of widespread protests.

If the Cliffe proposals are incorporated in the recommendations of the State Advisory Council on Unemployment Insurance, organized labor will have to bear a large share of the responsibility. For neither the C. I. O. nor the A. F. of L. has prepared a program for the revision of the New York State unemployment-insurance system. Yet a thorough overhauling is clearly necessary if only to make sure that the jobless receive benefits within a reasonable period of time. The present system is so complicated that errors are inevitable. Decentralization would help. So also would a wage-classification system similar to that proposed by Mr. Cliffe. But more important than either would be the introduction of a stamp-book system which would simplify employers' reports, cut administrative costs, and permit each worker to check his employer's contribution and calculate his own benefit rights.

The Social Security Board's recommendations for revision of the federal Social Security Act, made public last week, contain little that bears on the major problems before the states. No changes are suggested for simplifying the state laws or liberalizing the system of benefits. Nor is any action proposed for outlawing the highly dangerous merit-rating provisions due to come into effect in many states next year. Even more serious is the evident intention of the board to retain the cumbersome federal-state system instead of proposing a unified national program of unemployment insurance paralleling the old-age system. The fact that employers can lay plans to undermine the New York law without arousing much attention illustrates the danger of leaving matters of this type in the hands of the individual states.

WPA—or the Dole

BY ROBERT S. ALLEN

Washington, January 23

THE savage attack on hundreds of thousands of destitute jobless which takes the form of a drive to slash the President's deficiency relief budget is the handiwork of just one group—the reactionary Democrats. The Republicans have lent a willing hand, but only after their Democratic tory brethren made it easy for them to do so. Much as the G.O.P. boys wanted to wield the ax on WPA funds, they were too fearful of political repercussions to take the initiative. In secret caucuses they decided that taking the responsibility for a relief cut in midwinter was too risky for a party trying to stage a comeback, and that the thing to do was to withhold their fire until the regular WPA appropriation came up in the spring. In the meantime they would follow the lead of the Democratic-controlled appropriation committees. If the committees approved Roosevelt's figure, they would go along. If the committees slashed the budget, swell. The Democratic Party would get the blame from the hungry, and the Republicans could claim they had no choice, while at the same time they could tell business men they had struck a blow for economy. This was sound strategy, for the tory-dominated committees rushed in where the Republicans feared to tread.

While these diehards prated about "economy" and "balancing the budget" they seemed totally unaware that the pitiful livelihoods of millions of men, women, and children were at stake. That there was any relation between human beings and the relief issue apparently never entered their minds. All they could see was the dollar sign. The same moronic obtuseness characterized their economic reasoning. Despite the lesson of the 1937 recession, when the ill-advised cutting down of government expenditures caused a business nose dive from which the country is still suffering, the reactionary cabal insisted that a deflationary economy policy must be enforced and that a good place to start the pruning was in relief.

Vice-President Garner, between frequent half-tumbler "blows for liberty," demanded that the President's figure of \$875,000,000 be slashed to \$500,000,000, which would have meant the dismissal on February 1 of more than 2,000,000 WPA workers. Despite the desperate warning of Mayor LaGuardia of New York and telegrams from scores of other city officials that their municipalities were unable to assume any new burdens, "Cactus Jack," rollicking owner of two banks and thousands of acres of Texas land, blandly insisted that these authorities were stalling and that they should be forced to carry a larger share of the

relief load by paring WPA to the bone. Senator Carter Glass, Senator Alva Adams, Representative Clifton Woodrum, Representative Edward Taylor, chairmen of the appropriation committees and subcommittees that handled the relief budget, all wealthy men, and others of their kind in the two chambers fully agreed with Garner. But they feared that such an extreme course at this time would play into Roosevelt's hands, and therefore held the cut down to \$150,000,000.

Even this slash, however, drew such a barrage of telegraphed and written protests that worried Senators began to scurry for cover. And when Borah indignantly announced that he would fight the reduction, the Democratic hatchet crew realized they had rough going before them. For one thing the Senate is not the House; for another, the Republican minority in the Senate is much smaller and not quite so machine-ridden as in the House. More ground-giving was in order, and in this pinch Senator Pat Harrison of Mississippi, chairman of the powerful Finance Committee and intimate pal of Bernard Baruch, undercover master-mind of last year's successful raid on the undivided-profits tax, came to the rescue. Pat proposed a "compromise": that the \$725,000,000 budget fixed by the House Appropriations Committee be retained, but with a provision that not more than 5 per cent of the workers be dismissed from WPA during the next two months; that is, only a mere 150,000 were to be thrown out on the streets during the cold-weather months. After that, during the remaining three months of the fiscal year, the WPA Administrator could discard the other million that the \$725,000,000 appropriation would require to be let out—all at one time or gradually, as he saw fit. Not being a member of the Appropriations Committee, Pat was unable to have the honor of offering this generous scheme himself. Senator Jimmy Byrnes of South Carolina, chairman of the Committee Investigating Unemployment and Relief, did it for him. And a good job he did of it, too. Senator Gerald Nye, North Dakota's "progressive" Republican, who a few days previous had echoed Borah's demand for a full relief budget, executed a complete somersault and landed squarely in the Harrison-Byrnes camp.

Behind the campaign against WPA now in progress on Capitol Hill is just one thing—a ruthless attempt to destroy the President's work-relief program and to substitute a dole system instead. That's the whole story. The hullabaloo about "politics in relief," boondoggling, and the other pious complaints is just a smoke screen to mask



the real objective—the destruction of WPA and the foisting of a soul- and body-wrecking dole on the unemployed. Privately the tory leaders admit this; a few of them go farther and joke about the “politics in relief” uproar. Of all the red herrings dragged out during the past six years this is the most sordid. As Senator Norris pointed out during the debate on Hopkins’s confirmation as Secretary of Commerce, the only one guilty of politics in relief is Congress. Every effort that has been made to ban political meddling in relief has been balked by one or both of the chambers. At the very time that the appropriation committees were riddling the WPA budget they were also writing a provision into the bill overriding the President’s action last fall in placing WPA administrative personnel under the Civil Service. And the men who perpetrated this boodle raid are among the foremost yammerers about “politics in relief.”

The fate of Donald W. Smith, whose reappointment to the National Labor Relations Board is being strongly

opposed by William Green, is still hanging in the balance. A few weeks ago Roosevelt decided not to renew Smith’s recess appointment and to name someone else. But since then a flood of telegrams and letters from A. F. of L. unions and central labor councils indorsing Smith has caused the President to backtrack again. Smith’s friends are exerting pressure on the White House to withhold final decision for a while in order to give them a chance to do some proselytizing in the Senate. The latest inside report is that certain Senators who had been opposed to Smith are now, after examining his record, for him, and that the line-up is very close. Smith’s supporters feel that if they are given sufficient time they can win over enough votes to assure his confirmation. Meanwhile there is a merry undercover scramble for the job. One of the most active aspirants is Mrs. Cornelia Pinchot, wife of the one-time “progressive” Republican Governor of Pennsylvania. The chances of Mrs. Pinchot being named, should the President in the end decide to drop Smith, are remote.

America in the Post-Munich World

BY ELIOT JANEWAY

I. America Has the Power

IN 1929 the United States stopped growing. In a geographic sense, of course, we had stopped growing long before. But in 1929 our economy stopped growing; and for ten years the country has faced the enormous problems of oppressive unemployment, of increasingly acute farm crisis, and of general industrial stagnation. To business man and New Dealer alike, 1929, as it recedes into the distance, has taken on more and more the tinge of a Golden Age. Because 1929 has remained the top on so many charts—of production, of employment, of investment—we are likely to overestimate what a return to its rate of activity would offer to the United States of 1939. Even if our productive output were to regain the peak reached in 1929, and even if capital were to go back to work as energetically as in that golden year, unemployment would remain oppressive and the farm crisis acute.

Productivity has so increased in the past decade that to achieve a 1929 volume of employment we should have to attain a volume of production far surpassing the 1929 record. But if production is to soar to new heights, there must be a resumption of capital investment in building, in railroad and utility equipment, in expansion and renovation through the whole of industry. The achievement of such investment is the problem that the New Deal must solve if it is to score a victory in the

time left to it. Physically, geographically, there are no new outlets for our already vast productive capacities. Our economy must develop through raised living standards, not through an increase of population. If the New Deal, or a subsequent Administration, does not have the courage and imagination to put into effect a program of increased employment through enormously increased production, that bastard of capitalism and socialism known as fascism will see that it is done—as it has seen to it in Germany.

And here, with the mention of Germany, we come to the second great change which has made the world of 1939 alien to that of a decade ago. In 1929 the United States lived in a relatively cooperative world where nations satisfied one another’s needs through international trade. In 1939 international trade—what is left of it—has become gun-running. With the development of blackmail as a political weapon, world trade is giving way to autarchy and barter. Europe, the great importer, no longer buys foodstuffs and commercial raw materials in the volume of the twenties. Crisis in the farm areas of the Americas and the rest of the crop-exporting world is the result. Now the products most desired by Europe and Asia are machinery and materials for making munitions. Instead of sending to Europe commodities to feed and clothe its people, we are exporting articles which are helping fascism to transform the economic life of Europe and Asia.

At last, out of the fog of depression and unsustained recovery, these two problems—the one domestic, the other foreign—have clearly emerged. If the New Deal is to survive, it must reconstruct our domestic economy so as to resolve the three crises of unemployment, farm surplus, and investment stagnation. But, first, it must withdraw the support it is furnishing to fascist schemes for the reorganization of Europe and Asia. We must look beyond the acts of open aggression which further that reorganization. The web of a new society, totally opposed to our own, is being spun continuously. Its makers employ now direct military methods, now economic, diplomatic, and psychological pressure. Whatever the means, the end is the same—the tightening of the fascist grip. This is a process which we, as a matter of national policy, must oppose. Fortunately the way is still open to us. The *Pax Germana* (or *Japonica*) cannot be fully realized until the dominated area is industrialized on a mass-production basis. The United States is the only country in the world which has developed the mass-production technique. And this technique, so necessary to the countries of the axis, we are helping them to reproduce. The axis powers—even Germany—are too small, too poor, too weak industrially to generate by themselves, and quickly enough, the machine power they need. Without this machine power, that is, without the United States, the axis cannot master Europe and Asia. The purpose of this series is, first, to describe the relationship of the United States to the fascist reorganization of Europe and Asia; secondly, to show how in our own farm crisis, and in the crisis of Latin America, axis economics has already cost us dear; and, finally, to elaborate a program of *democratic* reconstruction for this hemisphere—for, whether by democracy or by fascism, we are in for reconstruction.

To say that the United States is more powerful industrially than any other nation is to indulge in understatement. It is more pertinent, and more impressive, to compare the United States to all the areas now dominated, or even remotely likely to be dominated, by the dictatorships. I shall include all Europe and Asia—Germany, Italy, the British, French, Belgian, and Dutch empires, Japan, Poland, all the Ruritanias, and Russia, too—in this statistical comparison. I shall exclude only Latin America and Canada, whose conquest by the fascist powers is least likely.

In comparing productive capacity inside and outside the United States, let us forget that much of the best and most modern plant of Japan, Germany, and other industrial countries came from the United States, and depends upon our products and technology for continuous and efficient operation; and that most of the plant here is large-scale, built for mass production, while much of that abroad is antiquated, marginal, and unsuited for

assembly-line production. The American steel industry can at capacity produce 72,000,000 tons of ingots a year. In 1937, when the armament race was driving the rest of the world to work its steel mills to the limit, total foreign production came to no more than 76,000,000 tons. This foreign capacity is slowly being increased. In the United States, on the other hand, there is no present incentive for an increase in basic ingot capacity. But with our engineering resources we could, with sustained prosperity, bring it up to 100,000,000 tons within two years. Moreover, for general industrial and many armament purposes the most important steel product is sheet and strip, such as is produced by our continuous mills. We have 13,000,000 tons of capacity in our continuous mills, which are about a hundred times as efficient, fast, and accurate as the hand mills in operation through the rest of the world. We have sold some of these continuous mills abroad, but no other country has as much as a million tons of capacity in operation or building. The possibility that other countries may soon design and construct their own continuous mills is utterly remote; Germany tried for a year to pirate our models before admitting defeat and paying cash. The American firm installing these models abroad says that it experienced more difficulty in introducing its methods in Japan than anywhere else except in England—the last stronghold of handicraft technique.

If steel is the basis not only of industry but of armaments, the test of a modern army is the degree of its motorization, and that of a modern industrial organization is the development of mass-production facilities in the scores of industries which make possible automobile manufacture. In 1937 the rest of the world combined produced slightly more than 1,300,000 cars of varying quality. In the same year Detroit, shut down first by strikes and then by recession, produced more than 5,000,000 cars without taxing capacity.

Omitting details of our preponderance over the rest of the world in general capital-goods production, power use, and so on, we can take one more example—oil, the production of which is a measure of fighting ability, and the consumption of which is a barometer of industrial advance. The United States in 1937 produced and consumed about the same proportion of world oil output, that is, just a little less than two-thirds—the manufacture of synthetics abroad being included. If Latin American production is added, in consideration of President Roosevelt's recent reference to hemispheric defense, American output becomes 77 per cent of the total.

As it dominates world production, the United States also dominates world finance—or what is left of it. We hold 60 per cent of the world's monetary gold supply in our coffers—a fantastic arrangement, and one we shall regret. We may bury our bullion in Kentucky rather than use it in any productive way, but that does not alter

the fact that it gives us a potential whip-hand in the world's money markets as long as other countries continue to rely on it. Its value will diminish, however, as the power of fascism grows.

Finally the United States occupies a key position as a consumer of industrial raw materials. The colonial empires, on which the power of the Western democracies has so long rested, find here their greatest and most reliable cash customer for rubber, tin, cocoa, and many other products. Our purchases of such staples outweigh those of the rest of the world, and general commodity prices abroad tend to follow the course of American business. No matter to what extent the British and French may desire, or be compelled, to align themselves with the axis, they must cater to the American market as long as they retain their empires.

Thus as producer, financier, and consumer America exerts an influence greater than that of the rest of the world combined—an influence to which *Realpolitik* must adjust itself. The rest of the world knows it. The United States apparently does not. But it is not a secret that can be kept. Sooner or later, as fascism becomes an integrated world system, the United States will be compelled to use its power. The question then will be who, what group, will use it? Will an American democracy act in time to turn it against the growth of fascism, or will it fall into the hands of an American dictatorship?

It is certainly time that a reckoning be asked of the New Deal's custodians of foreign policy, of those responsible for the misuse and perversion of this power in the arming of fascism. If we do not demand it now, we may be sure that it will be demanded, after the consequences of our present policy have become clear, by the enemies of the New Deal—their ranks augmented by millions to whom the ineffectiveness, in a fascist world, of the fine sentiments of Mr. Hull has brought the first chill of disillusion. If democracy is to survive, it must use its own power now for its own ends. What we have been doing since the rise of fascism is to use this power against democracy. Briefly, we have been the chief exporter to Germany, Italy, and Japan of the raw materials, the capital goods, and the technique necessary for armament and, therefore, for aggression. But after the success of aggression must come the consolidation of conquests; and for this our products and engineering will be needed on a larger scale than ever.

In the years when world trade was flourishing, the exports which contributed most to our prosperity were farm products—cotton, wheat, and meat. But those exports have fallen by 60 per cent. With the increasing preference for guns over butter, Europe's purchases have changed radically in character. They may be divided into two categories, the first of which is capital goods. In 1937 the United States exported more electrical equip-

ment and industrial machinery than the average for the boom years 1926-30, when private capital investment was developing commercial markets abroad. The customers for these exports were England, Germany, Japan, and Italy; Russia was a leading purchaser, too, but much of its buying was of replacements for machinery acquired in the pre-armament period. Significantly, our 1937 motor-truck exports were a third greater than the 1926-30 average, and aircraft exports were eight times greater. It is difficult to see how even diehard exponents of the advantages of international trade can take much comfort from this commerce. After all, these exports went largely to nations which will use them to attain military self-sufficiency, to nations against whom we suddenly find it necessary to arm. If fascist armament is really a menace to the United States, whose fault is it?

The second category of our exports includes strategic raw materials, which have gone to the same big four, Russia excluded. Crude petroleum exports have increased to three times the boom-period average; if exports of refined products have decreased, it is because we have been selling the refineries themselves to our customers. Though they have increased their purchases of steel-making equipment, the fascist powers have found their need for steel so desperate that their purchases of iron and steel products have increased by 77 per cent over those of 1926-30. Scrap purchases have increased sixteen-fold. Exports of industrial chemicals have also increased. Automobile exports have fallen slightly, because machinery imports and self-sufficiency programs have been oriented toward the increase of automobile production within the arming states. That these programs have succeeded to any extent is due to American machinery.

Imports of capital goods are vitally important to the arming powers. Japan needs American motor trucks and railroad equipment if it is to conquer China; Germany needs Detroit-style assembly-line tooling if it is to industrialize inner Europe; England needs extensive industrial overhauling if it is to remain in the arms race; and, most important of all, all the arming nations need the machinery and materials which will allow them to do these things themselves. What do these exports mean to American economy?

Although exports of armament necessities reached record proportions in 1937, the course of the American business cycle was unaffected. Simultaneously with this increased export trade the United States was experiencing the sharpest production decline in its history. The very industries in which recession was most rapid and drastic—steel, oil, the automotive industries—were those to which Europe and Asia were giving their biggest orders. For big as these orders were to the countries placing them, they were small compared to the routine operating schedule required by American industry for prosperous activity. Our internal economy experienced both boom

and collapse in 1937. In a typical industry like steel our exports amounted to about 7 per cent of the year's production—or about three weeks' work for our mills at the average rate of steel production. Our productive capacity is simply on a different scale from the consuming ability of the rest of the world. Only four steel companies bother with orders for export at all. Steady and increasing production depends on domestic orders.

This is true not only of the steel industry. Oil exports to the arming powers increased 74 per cent last year over 1937. But this did not prevent a price war and production curtailment, and the depression which hit the oil industry last year continues. The only industry in which export orders really managed to produce some prosperity during the disastrous last half of 1937 was machine-tool manufacture. Here the investment stagnation of the last decade has had its effect. With the shrinkage of new investment and the decline of replacement and modernization, the industry has not only failed to attain mass-production levels but has actually contracted. Should investment revive, reopening an enormous field for modernization, the machine-tool industry, like the rest of American business, would find that foreign orders were miniature and marginal.

Foreign business is too small to insure profitable operation to our industry under any circumstances. Nor can it balance the shrinkage that years of autarchy have caused in the great traditional exports of the United States—cotton, wheat, and meat. In 1936 our total

exports, having recovered from depression lows, were still little more than halfway to the 1926-30 level. In 1937 they were only about two-thirds of the 1926-30 average, in spite of the boom in armaments exports. Farm exports—the only ones really important or profitable to us—had decreased twice as much as the general average. As long as the farm market fails to recover from the blow dealt by this collapse of overseas demand, no possible profits to individual manufacturers or industries can compensate our economy. This is clearly recognized by industry. The vice-president of the General Motors Overseas Corporation declared in a recent speech that "the number of motor vehicles sold in the agricultural areas of the United States is far greater than the number sold in all our export markets combined. We have no illusions, in the last analysis, as to where our greater interest lies." Between automobile exports and farm exports, this head of an automobile export division said, the automobile industry will choose farm exports every time. From a commercial standpoint, then, industrial exports are a doubtful proposition, as industry itself is ready to admit. From the standpoint of the national welfare they are highly unprofitable.

[This is the first of a series of four articles intended to show the economic role of the United States in a world drifting toward fascism and the potential ability of this country to check that drift. Next week Mr. Janeway will show how the foreign trade of the United States is strengthening its possible enemies.]

That Franco-Soviet Pact

BY GENEVIEVE TABOUIS

Paris, January 10

MANY Frenchmen say that their government, through its shortsighted policy toward Germany, is responsible for Hitler. Many Germans, if they were permitted to express their views, would say that Hitler is responsible for the Franco-Russian pact, the only political alliance which inspires any fear in the Führer. As a matter of fact, the idea of making this pact was born in a line of "Mein Kampf": "We will never allow two Continental powers to exist in Europe. It is our right and even our duty to prevent by all means . . . even by force, if necessary . . . the maintenance of a military power on Germany's frontiers." As long as the Franco-Russian pact remains in force, Germany must anticipate a war on two fronts, that is, under the same conditions as those in which it was beaten in 1918.

It took certain factions in France years to understand that a Russian-German alliance would put France and

England in a position in which it would be impossible for them to maintain their places as world powers; and the Franco-Russian alliance of May 2, 1935, from the beginning encountered heavy opposition. This became particularly marked after the Popular Front came to power. The new and militant attitude of the working masses embarrassed the more conservative supporters of the alliance. The presence of the red flag and the resounding strains of the "Internationale" at official gatherings made the financiers, the big industrialists, and the aristocrats think that France was moving toward communism and that the Franco-Russian pact was the instrument which would bring about social revolution. They did all they could to discredit the alliance in the reactionary press. Aided by German propaganda, and the disfavor with which the English always viewed it, they made it impossible for the government to strengthen the pact by military or other conversations. Soon many

who had favored the pact could no longer stand the idea of being "sold to the Soviets." Finally the Popular Front leaders themselves, under pressure from the big financiers, without whose aid not even their government could carry on, were forced to allow the agreement to sink into the lethargy in which seemingly it languishes today.

Many reasons were advanced for condemning the Franco-Russian alliance, beginning with the argument that its effectiveness depends on the Council of the League of Nations. It was pointed out that the Council includes members of small countries which are rapidly coming under the influence of the authoritarian states and so might be considered anti-Russian. Almost from the signing of the pact, its opponents demanded its abrogation on the fallacious pretext that it prevented the reconciliation of France and Germany. They argued that as the Franco-Russian alliance of 1892 had brought about the war of 1914, the pact of 1935 would surely lead to another world war. Delbos, the Minister of Foreign Affairs from May, 1936, to March, 1938, adhered to a policy which can only be characterized as "timid" toward Russia, and his successor, M. Bonnet, has always considered the Franco-Russian pact an obstacle to a four-power pact, which is more to his taste.

As for the Moscow end of the agreement, the external policy of the Soviets is surrounded with so much mystery that only its broadest outlines can be seen. But the firm attitude of Russia during the last crisis indicates that its policy has nothing in common with politics as played by other nations. It seems clear for one thing that the Soviet government does not believe that any European war can be localized. It wants peace passionately, and diplomatically it fights with energy to maintain it. In pursuing this policy Soviet diplomacy gives proof of a profound understanding of the realities of the situation and an extraordinary agility. Above all, it stands by the principle that it must never submit to the "blackmail" threat of war which has coerced France and England.

In 1927, after the official break between Russia and England, and in the middle of the Franco-Russian crisis, Stalin wrote in the *Izvestia*, "The Soviet government must pursue its policy of peace without taking any notice of the pinpricks which may hurt its prestige." With French foreign policy in the hands of those who, like M. Bonnet, would like to escape the traditional forces which make friendship between the two countries indispensable for each, the U. S. S. R. has had to suffer many of those pinpricks. France, for example, has never taken the trouble to inform its ally of the diplomatic decisions it was making. The U. S. S. R. was not even told the text of the Franco-German accord until the evening it was signed! Nevertheless, the Soviets have been a faithful ally. Diplomatically they have consistently sided with the French, even when French policy conflicted with immediate Russian interests.

Certainly in the crisis over Czechoslovakia the Soviets stood ready to abide by their obligations. On September 21 M. Litvinov declared that Russian "military authorities were ready to take part at once in a conference with the military chiefs of France and of Czechoslovakia . . . to consider the measures which should be taken in view of the situation." And on the fateful evening of the Munich agreement M. Litvinov again warned the powers: "It will not be in the spirit of the League to avoid today a problematical war in order to have a definite one tomorrow—above all, when the appetite of insatiable aggressors is to be satisfied at the price of annihilation or mutilation of sovereign states." In ending he added, "The Soviet government is proud that it has nothing in common with this kind of politics and has no intention of deviating from its policy in the future, being convinced that under the conditions which exist today it is impossible to guarantee a true peace by leaving this path. It is to this road that we invite the other nations to return." The Russian advice was rejected, and the Soviets were not even consulted in the new partition of Europe; nevertheless, they did not renounce the French pact.

Since Munich the Germans have done their best to kill the pact once and for all. When Foreign Minister von Ribbentrop came to Paris on December 6 to sign the Franco-German agreement, his hidden purpose was to bring about the annulment of the Russian pact. But such is its potential strength that even those French ministers who like it least must maintain it to preserve the balance of power in Europe. These ministers have hoped at times that their behavior toward Moscow would force the Kremlin to denounce the understanding. But the Russians are too canny. Ribbentrop returned to Berlin without having obtained a "free hand in the East." And this may check Hitler's plans to organize a campaign against the Polish and Russian Ukraine.

On November 26 Poland renewed its non-aggression pact with Moscow. What is more, arrangements concerning armaments were concluded between the two countries. For the first time a French Foreign Minister saw Poland reconciled with the U. S. S. R. Here was a golden opportunity for France, but the Quai d'Orsay turned a deaf ear. The industrialists, financiers, and aristocrats now found another slogan—"If Germany is occupied in the East, it will not attack us on the Rhine." Thus the Polish ambassador pleaded in vain with M. Bonnet to negotiate a spectacular renewal of the Franco-Polish alliance.

For all of the French failure to seize the opportunity, the Poles did not give up. On January 5, 1938, after six weeks of strain in German-Polish relations, Colonel Beck went to Berchtesgaden. He persuaded the Führer that war would be inevitable if the Reich attacked the Polish Ukraine, that the U. S. S. R. would defend Poland, and that France could not in such an eventuality adopt the same attitude it had taken toward Czechoslovakia. Since

Ribbentrop had not brought back from Paris the certainty that France would not honor its pledges to Moscow and Warsaw, Hitler was after all compelled to give way before the Franco-Soviet pact. Instead of moving east he may find himself compelled to turn his attention toward the Mediterranean and the colonial question.

Thus, whether certain French ministers want it or not, the Franco-Russian pact, invisible but ever present, dominates the European situation. It may well be that it will save the peace. The French people are unanimous in

wanting to fight for their colonies, even those received by the Treaty of Versailles. If Germany presses its claims to the utmost, it will have to attack France on the Rhine, and that will call the Franco-Russian pact into effect. It is therefore entirely possible that after a lively campaign of "blackmail," reinforced by mobilization of air, naval, and military forces, Germany, seeing that France is determined to fight, will renounce its claims out of the old fear of becoming engaged in a world war in which it would have to defend itself on two fronts.

Must Democracy Use Force?

II. PEACE AND THE LIBERAL ILLUSION

BY REINHOLD NIEBUHR

THE capitulation of Munich was obviously caused in part by the fact that the oligarchy which holds the strategic positions in our capitalistic democracies does not really intend to protect democracy against fascism if such a defense would lead to the destruction of fascism and a consequent social revolution. On the other hand, the tory oligarchs, for whom Chamberlain, Daladier, and Bonnet were the typical spokesmen, could not have succeeded in an essentially treasonable policy if a healthy spirit of opposition to their program had not been enervated among the general populace by political and moral confusion. These confusions, which are, broadly speaking, liberal confusions, have their source in the basic cultural presuppositions underlying democratic life. The crisis of Munich therefore raises the question whether democracy as a political technique has an adequate cultural foundation for meeting the challenge of fascism.

The cultural foundation of fascism is Nietzschean romanticism, with its glorification of force and vitality as self-justifying, combined with primitive romanticism, with its substitution of racial and tribal particularism for liberal universalism. The cultural foundation of Western democracy is eighteenth- and nineteenth-century liberalism. This liberalism rests upon rationalistic optimism. It believes that it is comparatively easy to "substitute reason for force" and that mankind is embarked on a progressive development which will substitute "free cooperative inquiry" for political partisanship and social conflict. It regards the peculiar ambitions and desires of races and nations as irrationalities which must gradually yield to universal values, generally recognized and established by reason, that is, by some kind of discarnate reason of pure objectivity. Democracy, in other words, rests upon a faith in the essential goodness of man and

the possibility of completely rational behavior. Is it possible to meet the challenge of a civilization which glorifies force if the relation of force to reason in political action is understood no better than liberalism understands it? Is it possible to maintain any degree of universalism against tribal fanaticism and particularism if the relation of the organic unities of race and nation to a civilization which transcends them is not comprehended in more dialectical terms than it is by liberalism? Is it possible to resist a civilization organized for war if the forces which seek to guide mankind to a pacific way of life do not understand that political tension and friction between contending political wills are normal, or at least inevitable, characteristics of national and international life? Is liberalism, in short, not too simple a creed to suit the complexities of our tragic era?

It would be sad indeed if democracy in political life were to succumb to fascism because the liberalism which supports it creates confusion in critical hours. For democracy in politics is a perennial necessity; and liberalism may prove to be no more than a passing middle-class illusion in a brief period of expanding capitalism. Democracy is a perennial necessity because justice will always require that the power of government be checked as democracy checks it; and because peace requires that social conflict be arbitrated by the non-violent technique of the democratic process. Democracy as a political system is important precisely because liberalism as a culture is not based on truth, that is, because its interpretation of human nature is fallacious and too optimistic. Power must be held under democratic restraints because irresponsible power is always dangerous. It is dangerous because a dominant oligarchy always pretends a false identity between its interests and the general welfare. Methods of arbitrating conflicting social interests must

be found precisely because various social groups cannot be expected to have perfect, rational conformity of interests. A non-violent expression of the claims and counter-claims of politics is important precisely because political arguments are never merely rational arguments. The threat of force against recalcitrant minorities is always implied in them. If this is not understood, the liberal is in danger of betraying the essentials of a democratic civilization for the sake of loyalty to democratic principles, that is, for the principle of arbitration with the foe. If the foe happens to represent a civilization which incarnates war as the ultimate good, the liberal may sacrifice the institutions of peace for the sake of a peaceful settlement with a foe who intends to destroy them. Thus peace is lost for peace's sake, because it is not understood that there are moments in history when the covert threat of force which underlies all political contention must be brought into the open. If it is brought into the open by a foe who may be weaker than you but who glories in the threat and pretends to desire overt conflict, he will have the advantage of you despite your greater strength. If you have given publicity to your moral scruples and your political confusion, he will have the greater advantage. He will make impossible demands because he knows that you have been foolish enough to draw an absolute moral distinction between the threat of force which underlies all political conflict and the overt use of force into which it will occasionally develop.

It is necessary to repeat that we do not accuse Chamberlain and Daladier of having worked under the disadvantages of such scruples. But it is apparent that they could be celebrated as apostles of peace and of the "Christian method" only because such confusion existed. Throughout the crisis the London *Times*, for instance, accepted the dismemberment of Czechoslovakia with equanimity. Indeed, it suggested the idea of such a settlement at a time when the governments were not ready for it. But it insisted that Hitler would have to enter Czechoslovakia in a gentlemanly and decent fashion. "To the nations of the free Western tradition," it declared, "no solution is tolerable except the way of reason." By this it meant nothing but a demand that the victor hide the nakedness of his sword as he brandished it over the vanquished. Hitler must enter the prostrate democracy according to a time table. Political realities, such as the shift of power which would result from the dismemberment of the unhappy nation, were obscured. The *Times* called for a "judgment upon the plain merits and demerits of the German demands" and insisted that this judgment, to be "utterly realistic," must exclude "speculative opinions whether Herr Hitler can be made to yield without fighting and whether his regime can face the strain of a war." The *Times*, in other words, believed, or pretended to believe for the sake of its moral-

istic readers, that there is a transcendent perspective in politics, fortunately located in Britain, where the "plain merits and demerits" of the case could be judged; and it also pretended to believe that the assessment of German strength and weakness which occupied every chancellery of Europe was an irrelevance. The *Times* hailed the peace of Munich as a triumph of "reason over force." It grudgingly recognized that this political argument was not an exercise in pure persuasion. "The gathering urgency of persuasion," it admitted, "was reinforced with unmistakable proofs of resolution for defense"; but fearful lest this admission of the horrors of politics might spoil the picture of triumphant reason, it hastened to add, "These things were not a threat, nor is it to be supposed that the German Chancellor would yield to threats; but there is no doubt that the evidence that Mr. Chamberlain offered concession from strength and not from weakness won him respect that might not otherwise have been accorded."

It would be unfair to regard the *Times* as a typical spokesman of the liberal creed. Its blandness is too perfect to be honest; and its function as voice of the British aristocracy suggests that it was consciously hiding the political realities of Munich rather than unconsciously obscuring them. But the letters which poured into its correspondence columns prove that among its readers were many who honestly believed that Munich represented a triumph of the methods of peace, of democracy, of civilization over the threat of war. Meanwhile Czechoslovakia lay prostrate under the heel of the conqueror, and a few days after Munich, Hitler spoke at Saarbrücken and thumbed his nose at the democracies, who were supposed to have won his respect because they made concessions from strength and not from weakness.

The liberal culture which is unable to assess the relation of force to reason, to understand the coercive element in all political life, and to appreciate the "ideological" taint in all human reason when the interests of the reasoner are involved is compounded of the characteristic prejudices of academics and business men. In this compound is usually an admixture of denatured Christian perfectionism. This religious perfectionism has reduced Christian pacifism, which in its pure form knows martyrdom to be its end, to a counsel of prudence. It promises that the way of non-violence will in the long run gain a more certain victory over your foe than the way of violence. But it is indefinite about the length of the run. This kind of Christianity prompted the Archbishop of Canterbury to hail the victory of Hitler in Austria because it was "bloodless."

To the culture of liberalism eighteenth- and nineteenth-century academics—and many belated colleagues in the twentieth century—contributed the idea of an increasingly discarnate rationality which would finally rise above the welter of human conflict and decide all contentious

issues according to the "plain merits and demerits" of the case. The business men contributed to the illusions of liberalism for two reasons. For one thing they were the first oligarchs who held their dominant position in society by the exercise of covert, or economic, rather than overt, or military, power. As Bertrand Russell has recently observed, economic power does not kill but merely starves to death. Thus it meets the Archbishop of Canterbury's test of bloodlessness. Secondly, in the last two hundred years the wealth of the industrial nations increased and their political influence expanded so greatly that the realities of social conflict were obscured until the decay and contraction of this latter day set in. For the same reason the illusions of liberalism are more stubborn in America than in any other country, with the possible exception of Britain. The wealth of this nation and its geographic isolation have contributed to illusions which prompt our statesmen to lecture Europe on the advantages of "reason over force" while building a larger navy.

There are those who insist that Marxism has added to the confusion created by liberalism and who even believe that Marxist parties helped to enervate the resolution of the democratic nations in their recent hour of trial. This charge must be refuted, at least in part. The inadequacy of a man like Léon Blum in the crisis obviously stems from his liberalism rather than from his Marxism. Marxism has in fact been denatured to a considerable degree by liberalism in all Western democratic nations. The fact is that Marxism, in its pure form, has been the most potent critic of liberal illusions. Who understands the pretensions of "rational objectivity" in social conflict better than a real Marxist? Or for that matter the invalidity of an absolute distinction between the covert and the overt use of force? Yet it must be admitted that the provisional realism of the Marxists may quickly result in new illusions and confusions. Since capitalism is regarded as the root of all injustice—rather than as what it is in fact, the most potent source of economic injustice in contemporary society—the Communist Marxist inclines to regard Russian diplomacy as, by definition, a force of pure disinterestedness in international affairs and to dismiss charges of political injustice in Russia with incredulity. The Socialist Marxist, on the other hand, seeking to take the position of uncompromising opposition to capitalism vacated by the Communist opportunists, insists that since all evil comes, by definition, from capitalism, it is an error to make any distinction between British imperialism and German fascism. Thus he makes common cause with the liberal who will not defend democracy because it would cease to be democracy if he defended it. The Socialist will not defend democracy because it is not pure democracy but is corrupted with capitalistic injustice.

If to the liberal illusions of the middle classes and the simplicity of Marxist judgments we add the dishonesties

of the capitalistic oligarchs who prefer fascism to an extension of democracy, we have a cultural situation which, if not corrected, is bound to lead to the complete triumph of fascism. It is certainly the principal explanation for the fateful inability of democratic civilization to resist fascist aggression up to the present time.

Nietzschean morality perversely transposes all values and raises the disease of social life, conflict, to the eminence of the criterion of all values. If it is to be defeated, the civilization which defeats it must be informed by a culture which understands that though disease is not normal, its perils are constant, and that some of the best medicines are poisons taken in moderation. A liberal culture does not understand man in the unity of his body and soul, in the urgency of his physical needs, in the interestedness of all rational processes when they are concerned with his vital wants. It does not understand, therefore, the necessity of coercion for the sake of securing social cooperation and the necessity of resistance to power for the sake of securing justice. It habitually hides its covert brutalities from its own conscience and sickens at the thought of protecting what is still valuable and genuine in its culture from the overt brutalities of a resolute foe.

It may be that democracy is too intimately bound up with these liberal prejudices to survive their destruction. This is a pity. For if democracy dies it must be born again. There is no way to justice without it.

[This is the second of a series of three articles on the role of force in the preservation of democracy. The anti-pacifist position was set forth by Aurel Kolnai last week, and the peace-at-any-price argument will be offered by Bertrand Russell in an early issue.]

Study in Relief

By McALISTER COLEMAN

ON the morning of February 25 last, J. Romeo Scott, lieutenant of police of Hoboken, awoke and ate a hearty breakfast. He spelled out an article in the local paper stating that New Jersey, and Hudson County in particular, was showing the rest of the country how to run relief. In Hoboken, thanks largely to the economizing policies of Harry Barck, overseer of the poor for the past forty years and now in charge of direct relief, hundreds were being dropped from the rolls. There was an estimate that Barck had cut the number of recipients from two thousand down to a few hundred. This good work was submitted as a standard for other relief agencies. No one was being coddled in Hoboken.

On that same morning, in an old two-story frame house in the Italian section of Hoboken, Joseph Scutellaro awoke to face anew a desperate situation. He was an

unemployed carpenter thirty-seven years old, a frail little man only five feet high and weighing 110 pounds. He was afflicted with encephalitis, the brain ailment which entails delusions, fears, apprehensions—what Scutellaro called “funny ideas,” such as various ways of committing suicide. He was living with his wife and two children, Marie, aged seven, and Joseph, aged four, in a house that belonged to his father, where the older people also lived. The depression had struck fiercely at the Scutellaros. The old man, who had been a small contractor, lost his business. The son could find no steady work. By doubling up, the two families had managed to hang on to the house. But on that morning the father had but \$20 in the bank, and the son had no money at all. In a way it would have been better if they had not owned the house, for the story had gone around Hoboken that the Scutellaros were not so badly off. Didn’t they have the house and wasn’t it likely that the old man had stowed away something? This story had reached the ears of Barck. He accepted it, without investigating. That made it harder for the Scutellaros to get relief.

The carpenter went down to the cellar to chop up a wooden basket he had found near the empty coal bin. There had been no coal in the bin for a long time. Nor was there any gas or electricity in the house. There was one bottle of milk, and the driver had said he wouldn’t deliver any more until the back bill was paid. Scutellaro borrowed 50 cents from his father, bought three rolls, and gave the change to his wife. Then he heated some coffee for himself and his wife over the kindlings from the basket, gave the milk to the two children, who were in bed suffering from colds, and started off on a trip he had taken many, many times. It was to the office of Harry Barck in the City Hall.

A month ago that office had mailed the Scutellaros a check for \$5.70. But on his recent visits Scutellaro had received nothing but application blanks to fill out. Barck had yelled at him, as he yelled at most applicants who were not in the good graces of the administration, to “watch the mails” for another check. Some time back, Scutellaro, surmising that the overseer believed the story about his father’s hoarded wealth, had brought his good-looking young wife down to Barck’s office to confirm the story of their destitution. Barck had said at that time that Mrs. Scutellaro should be riding in a baby-carriage and that she had better not give any cash to Joseph because he would be spending it for guinney wine.

That was the way the overseer had with the poor people who came to him for help. Barck was seventy-two years old, a bitter and arrogant old man, with a deep contempt for relievers. The men were to him “goddam guinney loafers, kikes, and mokies,” and he told them so. The women were easier to look at, and Barck looked, but they were undoubtedly prostitutes at heart. Barck

reveled in the power he had over these people, who had no one to turn to but him. He was proud of his purging tactics. He gloated over his reputation for being the most hard-boiled poormaster in Jersey. One of his favorite lines was to tell the women that if they wanted money they should go out on the streets and solicit.

The men hated Barck and the women feared him. All sorts of fights went on every day at the office. Barck could still handle himself all right. He was six feet tall and weighed 210 pounds and was handy with his fists. But for extra precaution he had a policeman stationed at his office door, and he bought a police whistle to blow in emergencies.

When Scutellaro took his place in the line in front of Barck’s office, there was a fight going on inside. Presently the policeman came out, wrestling with a woman who was screaming with rage. Barck had practiced his wit on her, and she had spit in his face. The poormaster was wiping off the marks of the struggle when the little Italian came in alone. “Watch the mail, watch the mail,” Barck shouted without looking up. “Next applicant, next applicant,” he went on. And then, as he saw it was Scutellaro, “Tell your wife to go swing her bag.”

Scutellaro said at his trial in Jersey City that, hearing these familiar words, he struck at the overseer, who rose behind his desk and reached out to seize the Italian by the lapels of his coat. Scutellaro said that he backed away and that the old man, still pawing at him, fell over the desk, impaling himself on a spindle on which he filed rejection papers. There was no one else in the room at the time. People running in from other offices found Barck crumpled up behind his desk, dying from a wound in his heart. The twisted spindle was lying near him on the floor. Scutellaro was sitting in front of the desk staring straight ahead of him.

Now Lieutenant J. Romeo Scott took Scutellaro in his big hands. The officer testified at the trial that he was not in the building when the fight occurred, but that he heard about it and went up to the chief’s office, where they were questioning Scutellaro. The little Italian was repeating over and over in a flat monotone that Barck had fallen on the spindle. “He’s lying,” said Chief McFeely; “take him away, Romeo.”

Lieutenant Scott took his prisoner down to a long dimly lighted corridor in the City Hall basement. There he put the nippers on his prisoner. These consist of a single handcuff on a chain, with a little bar at the end which can be twisted to tighten up the cuff.

Samuel Leibowitz, lawyer for Scutellaro, had Scott sweating when the latter testified at the Italian’s trial in Jersey City two weeks ago. Scott denied that in that dark corridor he had twisted the nippers, and that he had shouted, with his fist under Scutellaro’s jaw, “You goddam guinney, if you don’t come through like the

chief said, I'll knock all your teeth down your throat." He swore that Hoboken police never give suspects "the business," that he was not in charge of "bulldozing" relief applicants and the underprivileged generally around headquarters, and that he had never seen a Hoboken cop treat a prisoner rough.

Scott took Scutellaro away at ten in the morning. Five hours later, upstairs in the chief's office, Scutellaro, dragging his legs, mumbling incoherently, "in a fog," as he said, "from all that suffering," signed a statement that he had stabbed Barck with the spindle. Scott stood beside him when he scrawled his name on the paper handed him by the police stenographer. After he had signed, Scott threw an arm over Scutellaro's trembling shoulder. "Good boy, Joe," said Scott, "you done what the chief told you."

At his trial Scutellaro was a poor witness for himself. He seemed in a daze. When he looked at Scott and Chief McFeely sitting in the front row near him, he wept. And under cross-examination he fainted dead away. He was found guilty of manslaughter.

I commend study of the full record of the Scutellaro case to those who would take one million Americans off the WPA rolls and turn them back to the mercies of local authorities.

In the Wind

SO FIERCELY and insistently have fascist propagandists proclaimed that President Roosevelt is a Jew that they have apparently convinced themselves. The daughter of George Roosevelt (he's related to F. D. R.) is married to an Italian nobleman and resides in Italy. Recently a fascist official told her she would have to withdraw her daughter from the school she was attending because of the new anti-Jewish decrees. Bewildered, she asked the officials how the decrees affected her child. "Well, aren't you a relative of President Roosevelt's?" the official retorted.

IT'S NO secret that Supreme Court Justice McReynolds has never been friendly with liberal court members, and an encounter which he had with Felix Frankfurter many years ago is not likely to alter that attitude. McReynolds, acting as government prosecutor in an anti-trust case, was arguing a technical point of procedure with his associates. Young Frankfurter—then Henry L. Stimson's "bright boy"—was called in, and he sharply criticized McReynolds's position. "But I wrote the law governing that point," insisted McReynolds. Whereupon Frankfurter demonstrated that Justice McReynolds was misconstruing the law which he had written himself.

THERE IS no doubt that Secretary Ickes erred in charging that the whole press had boycotted the report of a Johns Hopkins biologist on the harmful effects of smoking. Some of those most critical of Ickes's speech, however, are on shaky

ground. The *Washington Star*, for example, boasts that it did not exclude the tobacco story from its columns, but though the Associated Press released the story on February 24, 1938, the *Star* first mentioned it on March 29, and then in a column headed: "Stars, Men, and Atoms."

IN PARIS they are saying that France is now safe—because this time M. Bonnet has been bought by the French government.

THE INSTITUTE for Propaganda Analysis, which has just published a summary of native fascist activities, has obtained possession of a private letter written by George Deatherage, leader of the American Nationalist Confederation, in which he says:

... We are delaying further reorganization in the hopes that we can get General George Van Horn Moseley, recently retired, to head a national Christian organization that we can all back. If all interested will write him requesting such action, it will help a lot. . . .

SIGN IN a Prague store window: "We exchange gas-masks for German dictionaries." The New South Wales Labor Council's radio station has been closed down because it carried appeals for a boycott of Japanese goods. . . . If the Dies probe goes on, it is expected to direct heavy fire against the new "Films for Democracy" project, sponsored by many liberals. . . . To protest against the proposed Chaplin film caricaturing Hitler, Chaplin's spokesmen reply: "Chaplin has had this character since 1913. It's Hitler who looks like Charlie." . . . The aluminum trust trial is receiving virtually no press notice; meanwhile the Aluminum Company of America has signed contracts with sixty-six Sunday papers for a continuation of its "institutional advertising"—launched almost simultaneously with the government prosecution.

NAZI PROPAGANDA by German exchange students in this country has been frequently exposed. In recent months, however, at least three German students have turned anti-Nazi and refused to return to Germany.

A PRIVATE letter to an American from a Prague resident furnishes this light on the "new" Czechoslovakia:

German-speaking citizens of Czechoslovakia, asked to exchange residence with Sudeten Czechs, have shown no disposition to do so. . . . On the other hand the pride of Czechs remaining in the Sudetenland is humiliated by not receiving the honor of being enrolled in the German army. . . .

MARIAN ANDERSON, distinguished Negro singer, was scheduled to appear in Washington, D. C. In anticipation of a large audience, her sponsors sought to rent Constitution Hall, the only spacious auditorium in the city. They were informed that the owners of the hall would not rent it for a performance by a Negro. The hall is owned by the Daughters of the American Revolution.

[We invite our readers to submit material for *In the Wind*—either clippings with source and date or stories that can be clearly authenticated. A prize of \$5 will be awarded each month for the best item.—EDITORS THE NATION.]

Issues and Men

BY OSWALD GARRISON VILLARD

I HAVE been reading William Allen White's "A Puritan in Babylon: The Story of Calvin Coolidge" (Macmillan) with profound interest. I am greatly impressed by the labor and research which have gone into it. Mr. White has had the use of the unpublished William H. Taft correspondence and has diligently corresponded with men who contributed to the rise of Coolidge and were associated with him. In addition, he gives us the benefit of his own knowledge of Coolidge and utilizes still other new data. His effort to write the definitive life of Coolidge is plain.

What we have in this solid volume is not merely his interpretation of Coolidge but a painstaking and faithful picture of the social and economic and political scene in Massachusetts during Coolidge's rise from obscurity to the governorship and then, on a broader canvas, a portrayal of the swinish, orgiastic rush for wealth during the "Coolidge prosperity"—a prosperity unparalleled in history and bringing in its train dire disaster from which the innocent are still suffering more than the guilty. Both back-drops are painted with greater care and success than I have seen anywhere else. Throughout the book Mr. White considers Coolidge "a perfect throw-back to the primitive days of the republic, a survival of a spiritual race that has almost passed from the earth." But he is not consistent there, for he also calls him "a Yankee throw-back to McKinley's era," and it is hard to see how Coolidge could have been both.

That he was contradictory and enigmatic goes without saying. Mr. White once dared to ask Coolidge if he might peek under the mask he wore and see the man behind it. Mr. Coolidge replied: "Maybe there isn't any; I don't know." It is extremely doubtful if there was. Yet he had flashes of wisdom and of a thin New England humor much magnified in the retelling. If he said anything humorous or worth repeating, people marveled much as Samuel Johnson did when he saw a dog waltzing on his hind legs. When something came out of nothing, it was a phenomenon, a marvel. Mr. White leads me to believe that this timid little Mr. Milquetoast among Presidents cultivated his taciturnity as assiduously as he penuriously saved his pennies—in order to avoid the mistakes of the loquacious. He also proves that while Coolidge's rise was favored by luck to an astounding degree, he was uncannily shrewd in playing his cards and as selfish and self-centered and "sot" in doing so as it was possible for a human being to be.

Not only has Mr. White illuminated the man and his

time; his kindliness has made him say everything favorable to his subject that it is possible to record. No future biographer can treat him more generously. I, for one, could never write about Coolidge with such Christian forgiveness or put him under a microscope with such detachment. Not that Mr. White does not seek to be both judicial and objective; he obviously tries to be both. I cannot agree with his conclusions as to Coolidge's attitude toward the Boston police strike, but I admit that Mr. White has gone into this important question with far more care than I. Also I miss any reference to that vicious series of articles signed and sponsored by Mr. Coolidge when Vice-President, portraying the alleged red menace in our colleges. It would be valuable to know who wrote them and how much Coolidge received for this prostitution of his name and office.

Yet Mr. White does not gloss over Coolidge's obvious faults and sins. He admits that he stood in with lobbyists and accepted their aid and favors, though not their cash, that he rose by grace of big business and cultivated those rich men who could help him to rise. He had spasms of wishing to aid the welfare of the workers, but as Mr. White says, he was essentially middle-class and never once showed that "he was conscious of any other class than the middle class." Still, Mr. White feels that he was "never the conscious protagonist of the predatory powers." To which my reply is that those powers today are entirely correct in praying for the reincarnation of this "unconscious" protagonist of theirs. Had he been consciously their ally, what would have been left of America? He himself was completely satisfied by society as it was. He encouraged stock speculation—through dumb ignorance of what he was doing—as no other President ever dreamed of doing, and after he left office his mean, grasping, penurious soul rejoiced when he was put on one of J. P. Morgan's favored lists and allowed to make a lot of money by buying stock well below its market value.

I repeat, Mr. White has done a very valuable job—even if he is repetitious in places. I wish he had been able to include in his book Mrs. Coolidge's remarkable confession to Henry L. Stoddard (in his "It Costs to be President") that he, Stoddard, knew her husband better than she did on his political side. To me Coolidge remains a sinister, repellent, utterly cold, stupid, unenlightened President, whose regime did the country infinite harm economically and spiritually and precious little good. An example for American youth to shun.

BOOKS and the ARTS

The Pure in Heart

THE DEATH OF THE HEART. By Elizabeth Bowen. Alfred A. Knopf. \$2.50.

MODERN fiction of the subtler kind when written by women is likely to depict at length the trouble resulting from unsuitable and complicated people falling in love. The stays and obstacles once provided by difference in social position, family feuds, missent letters, and trumped-up misunderstandings have narrowed into drama arising from the fact that the lovers have neuroses that do not match, are in love for the wrong reasons, in love too late or too soon, or are incapable of love at all. Elizabeth Bowen in her previous novels has described such combinations, and Madame Colette has worked with them for years. Miss Bowen has also probed with great thoroughness into the reaction of sensitive children, sometimes the offspring of mismatings, thrown into situations of which they hold only one or two clues. "The House in Paris" successfully brought off an atmosphere of emotional tension, resulting when the past, present, and future converged on such a child, who was caught, between journeys, in rooms full of the tragedy to which he owed his being. The present book turns on a girl of sixteen, the product of a misalliance, who, when introduced into the "edited life" of her half-brother's smart London household, throws upon it the full glare of her innocence, breaks through its surface, and shows the lack of human feeling on which it is based.

Miss Bowen's young Portia Quayne is the daughter of a late second marriage, following an impulsive liaison, between a middle-aged conservative Englishman and a silly but warm-hearted widow. The first Mrs. Quayne with rather mean nobility divorces her husband and casts him off. Mr. Quayne, cut loose from his pleasant country moorings, is forced to live shabbily on the Riviera with his new family. After his death and that of Portia's mother, his son Thomas takes the child into his home, knowing that his father wanted some settled, decorous English experience for her. Portia, still feeling grief for her mother, enters a household built up with great taste and care by Anna, Thomas's wife. Everything in the exquisite house overlooking the park—the aquamarine curtains, the furniture rubbed "so that you can see ten feet into the polish," the ritual of beautiful food, the series of delightful effects—depends upon Anna. Even the family friend—called St. Quentin and a novelist—is choice and seems picked to match the wallpaper. Portia's brother, sunk in the depths of passionate cravings which marriage has not solved, is Anna's. And Eddie, the neurotic, charming young hanger-on, to whom Portia gives the full weight of her innocent affection, is Anna's—not her lover, but her amusement and her foil. It is Anna who at once instinctively ridicules the child, as she ridicules anyone of awkward human worth. Portia, learning of an ultimate betrayal, runs first to Eddie, who of course, although he has worked off some of his warped tenderness on her, rejects her; then to Major Brutt,

another misfit in Anna's *décor*. Major Brutt telephones the house and tells Thomas that Portia demands that they come to some decision about her. In a masterfully done scene the three disabused adults—Anna, Thomas, and St. Quentin—thrash the matter out at the dinner table. ("This evening the pure in heart have simply got us on toast.") They come to a decision. They send a servant, Mrs. Matchett, Portia's only confidant in the household, to fetch Portia back in a taxi, as one would send for a lost parcel.

Miss Bowen has elsewhere spoken of "the limitations of English narrative prose, with its *longueurs* and conventions dangerous to truth." In her novels she has taken every precaution to reduce these conventions to a minimum. The strokes come close, and every stroke tells. Miss Bowen is particularly good at reflecting one character in another, always making it clear that some see things partially while others take in every detail. Matchett, the self-contained upper servant, with her toughened sympathy and snobbery and her pride of the good artisan, sees everything. Eddie sees everything—in his way—and himself, "at once coy and insolent," only too well. Matchett can sum people up. Of the "sacrificing" first Mrs. Quayne she says: "I couldn't care for her; she had no nature"; of Anna: "Oh, she has her taste and dearly loves to use it. Past that she'll never go." Eddie says of Anna: "She loves to make a tart out of another person. She'd never dare to be a proper tart herself." Thomas has an occasional moment of insight into the society about him: "self-interest, given a pretty gloss." But Portia, not yet absorbed into "the guilty plausibility of the world," sees more than everything. She detects the impossibility of a natural human relationship between these people who write letters, go to dinner parties, talk at tea—always "stalking each other." She watches "thoroughly"; she tries to shake some human response out of Eddie; she importunes; she nags with the implacable fury of first love. At the end she gives the show away to simple, kind Major Brutt. "Anna's always laughing at you. She says you are quite pathetic. . . . And Thomas thinks you must be after something. They groan at each other when you have gone away. You and I are the same."

Miss Bowen's talent is so rich and so searching, and this novel stands so far outside the class of novels which resemble packaged goods put up for the trade, that one is tempted to give her nothing but praise. She sees deeply, but not widely enough. Corruption has not lately entered the class of which she writes; the heart is not dying in these people; it never lived in them. And her tone, too keyed up, never lets down for a moment; the *longueurs* are deleted to such an extent that they are missed. Beautifully done descriptions of times of day and the weather edge the action—to a tiresome degree. The backgrounds for emotions are chosen with care: one, an empty seaside boarding-house on a Sunday morning, is almost unbearably appropriate. Miss Bowen can cook the vulgar English to the same crispness to which she treats their betters. But "The Death of the Heart" is too packed, too brilliant, for its own good. What Miss Bowen

lacks is a kind of humility. She has forgotten more than many novelists ever knew, but what Turgenev, for example, knew, and was chary of expressing, she cannot quite deal with. Once in a while the reader hears the accent of self-satisfaction, if not display, in the novelist. But for all that, "The Death of the Heart" deepens our view of the horrors experienced by open innocence up against a closed world.

LOUISE BOGAN

Medical Care in Britain

HEALTH INSURANCE WITH MEDICAL CARE: THE BRITISH EXPERIENCE. By Douglass W. Orr and Jean Walker Orr. The Macmillan Company. \$2.50.

THE authors of this revealing book had the wit to go direct to the producers and the consumers of medical service—rank-and-file British doctors, workingmen and their wives. Even the investigations of two royal commissions which have issued elaborate reports on health insurance during the twenty-five years of its existence never included direct testimony from those whom the British call its beneficiaries and the American Medical Association would describe as its victims.

The social worker would call on Mrs. Caldwell whose husband works for the L. M. and S. Railway, and Mrs. Caldwell would serve a cup of tea while telling the story of her family's experiences with sickness and with national health insurance. The doctor would meet a group of employed men at one of the settlements and get a discussion started on the whys and wherefores of the "panel system." The men enjoyed it because they in turn could bombard us with questions about Chicago and Hollywood.

Of course we interviewed doctors as well, doctors in private practice as well as doctors in official positions and officers of the British Medical Association. Nor did we neglect civil servants, members of Parliament, and others.

British workers say, "Yes, and more," when asked if they want medical service and health insurance. "Yes," they like what they get now, incomplete as it is. They want "more" care, a fuller service.

British doctors also say, "Yes, and more," when asked what they think about health insurance. This testimony came from everyday doctors and is also the officially expressed opinion of the British Medical Association. Considering that the American Medical Association has for twenty years portrayed health insurance as a failure from the standpoint of the British physician as well as of the public, this testimony is pertinent and overdue.

Official and other literature is drawn on for an account of the structure, history, and problems of British health insurance, tax-supported medical services, hospitals, clinics, and public-health work, but the meat and spice of the book lie in its accounts of what doctors and patients say. Dr. Orr, a young Western physician, did the work on a fellowship from the National Federation of Settlements; his wife, an experienced social worker, shared his responsibilities in collecting information and writing.

Their work is careful although impressionistic, with enough history to give perspective and enough forecast to stir the imagination. British health insurance is a very partial

answer to the problems of medical care in Great Britain because it covers only the services of general practitioners, not specialist or hospital care, and only employed persons, not their families. Moreover, a network of tax-supported medical services, voluntary and governmental hospitals, school medical services, and public-health work has also grown up under local and national auspices in Great Britain. The result cannot be called a system because neither is it organized as a whole, nor are its parts coordinated with one another. The Orrs' last chapter, summarizing the British experience and suggesting some applications to our own country, assumes too much and demands too little. It is not enough that we avoid Britain's mistakes. In the United States we can start from a higher level of facilities and resources toward a better goal than the "general medical service for the nation" now proposed by the British Medical Association. MICHAEL M. DAVIS

Capitalism: A Diagnosis

SEEDS OF DESTRUCTION. By John Blair. Covici-Friede. \$4.

THIS sober and careful analysis of the functional weaknesses of capitalism is an admirable index to its subject. Mr. Blair has assembled a massive body of evidence to show that capitalism breaks down because of its inability to observe four axioms. It fails to maintain the army of the employed, and reduces the wages of those whom it continues to employ. It raises prices without a proportionate increase in wages. It distributes too great a proportion of the national income to those in the upper brackets. It needs a power to expand continually which it is unable to achieve. In a sense, Mr. Blair's account is a magistral statistical demonstration of the well-known thesis that while capitalism has solved the main technical problems of production, it has proved unable to solve those of distribution. To prove his point, he has ransacked the available literature for illustrations, so that his volume really becomes an invaluable guide both to the government documents of the last twenty years and to the large number of commentaries with which the economists and statisticians have provided us.

Mr. Blair considers in some detail the methods by which the proponents of capitalism seek to meet the difficulties involved. He rightly emphasizes the fact that their care is the need on the one hand to lower prices and on the other to raise wages. But he shows, I think conclusively, that what he calls the "aggravating trends"—the costs of distribution, for example, the centralization of capitalism, and the disappearance of frontiers—make it extraordinarily unlikely that these difficulties can be transcended. He arrives, in fact, by a route akin to that which the orthodox economists follow, at the conclusion that the contradiction at the heart of capitalism is too profound to be surmounted. The pathology of the system has become so integral a part of its life that the normal concepts of which its exponents dispose have neither relation to nor validity in the system viewed as a going concern. This, of course, raises the essential question of the power of capitalism to survive; and it is, I think, a fair inference from Mr. Blair's impressive evidence that this is not merely highly dubious but, even more, a prospect which offers us the cer-

tainty of continued, and even of increased, social tension.

Mr. Blair would, I imagine, be the last to claim either that his thesis is new, or that the manner of his argument is in any sense novel. Its value lies rather in the massive detail by which it is surrounded, and the care with which he has tested the classical assumptions on their own ground. From these angles, the virtue of his treatment is great. He is skilful in the selection of his data and careful in his arrangement of them. Writers like Professor Robbins in England, or Professor Viner in this country, are here presented with a pattern of actuality which calls into fundamental question the validity of the ground they have chosen to occupy in their defense of the existing order. To have done this so clearly and so persuasively is a great merit. It will be interesting to watch the course of the debate to which Mr. Blair's timely volume is bound to give rise.

HAROLD J. LASKI

Painter of Pittsburgh

SKY HOOKS. The Autobiography of John Kane. J. B. Lippincott Company. \$3.50.

SOME day Carl Sandburg should write a poem on John Kane, the workman-painter whose autobiography, "Sky Hooks," is now presented four years after his death. An Irishman born in Scotland in 1860, Kane began to push cars of shale in the mines when he was only ten years old. When he emigrated to America ten years later he again found employment as a miner. He was also a steelworker, a street-paver, watchman at a railroad crossing, construction-gang foreman, munitions worker, master carpenter, and fist-fighter of some renown. It was in the midst of these various occupations that he resumed the drawing a harsh schoolmaster in Scotland had interrupted many years before.

In his early thirties Kane lost a leg in a switchyard. Unwilling to sue, he continued gamely to seek his living with his own hands. He became a house painter; hence the title, which is derived from the grapnels by which a painter's scaffold is fastened to the side of a building. In this pursuit—indeed, it was while he was painting freight cars on his first big contract—he suddenly began to make landscapes which he later covered over with another coat. More and more of his time he gave to drawing. Sundays he painted for his own enjoyment. His interest in painting was enhanced by his sorrow for the death of his only son. During the severe depression of 1907 Kane wandered through Ohio and Pennsylvania, enlarging and tinting photographs. But always he returned to his beloved Pittsburgh and particularly his home in the "Strip," the city's worst slum. Here he did the views of cobbled streets, smudged brick buildings, busy bridges and gray rivers and puffing smokestacks for which he is best known. "Why shouldn't I?" he once retorted. "I helped to build Pittsburgh's mills and homes; I paved its streets, made its steel, and painted its houses. It is my city; why shouldn't I paint it?"

In 1927 the Carnegie International hung one of his industrial landscapes. Soon the dealers came. But Kane continued to be an "outdoor painter" almost to the end of his life. His work is chiefly dependent upon subject matter, though a combination of Gaelic fancy and a most touching wistfulness

almost imparts life to his forms as such. A strong, hard, simple man, fighting his way along, he has left at any rate a beginning of the translation of "smoke and steel" to canvas. His book is therefore a significant document in the story of democratic culture.

JEROME MELLQUIST

Marxist History of England

A PEOPLE'S HISTORY OF ENGLAND. By A. L. Morton. Random House. \$3.

MR. MORTON has written a Marxist interpretation of English history. Marxism is both a science and a metaphysics. As a science it explains historical phenomena in terms of systems of production and class conflicts. As a metaphysics it goes beyond the facts by assuming that causation in human affairs is, in the last resort, always economic, ideological factors being derivative; and it interprets history teleologically, regarding it as a process toward the predestined end of communism. Marxist science provides the historian with a method of great value; Marxist metaphysics, on the other hand, results only in propaganda. Both these aspects of Marxism are exemplified in Mr. Morton's book.

This is probably the best one-volume popular account of English political and economic history which has appeared. Its style is forceful and vivid, it is based on the most recent research, and it is refreshingly free from that air of patriotic self-congratulation which most British historians assume when they approach such sacred themes as the empire and government by Parliament. Mr. Morton is aware of a number of facts—such as the long oppression of Ireland—which rarely find their way into the official histories; yet at the same time he does not succumb to the temptation to shower abuse upon any character who does not happen to belong to the proletariat. He does not lean too heavily upon the prophets of the Marxist faith; he dutifully inserts a few long quotations from Marx or Lenin, but having paid his respects to holy writ, he then proceeds to ignore it. The only instance in which he allows himself to be led astray is in his repetition of the theory, borrowed by Marx from David Urquhart, that Palmerston was in the pay of Russia. For the most part Mr. Morton takes his facts from competent authorities; and by interpreting them in terms of class conflicts he succeeds in illuminating many episodes in English history—the dictatorship of Cromwell, for example—which, in the hands of more conservative historians, have seemed almost unintelligible.

But if this book exhibits the value of Marxism as a science, it also illustrates—though less obviously—some of the dangers of Marxism as a metaphysics. In the first place, it deals exclusively with politics and economics. Ideological influences are ignored. Mr. Morton devotes one paragraph to a description of Puritan theology, but he says nothing about the social implications of Puritanism or the reasons why Puritanism became the creed of the English bourgeoisie. The great exponents of bourgeois liberalism—John Locke, Adam Smith, Jeremy Bentham—are not even mentioned. Mr. Morton's Marxism is too often of that vulgar variety which treats human beings as governed directly by economic motives; he displays no comprehension of the importance of climates of

opinion, which may be strongly influenced by economic factors but are never wholly determined by them; or of how these climates of opinion may often be so pervasive as to govern the behavior of individuals even in violation of their economic interests.

In the second place, Mr. Morton brings to history a theory of value. Certain forces—the bourgeoisie in the seventeenth century, for example—are praised as “progressive”; other forces not so. The Marxist criterion of progressiveness is economic productivity, and this conception unduly narrows the scope of history. Certain non-economic achievements would appear also to be worthy of commendation, even though they cannot be fitted into any chain of events having communism as its end-product. Thus the English bourgeoisie of the seventeenth century was not only economically progressive; it also created a system of individual liberties, based on the rule of law, which appears—now that it is in process of being destroyed—as one of the essentials of civilized living. To this, however, Mr. Morton makes no reference. He mentions the Habeas Corpus Act only to call attention to the fact that early in the nineteenth century it was temporarily suspended.

H. B. PARKES

Philanthropic Money

MONEY TO BURN. By Horace Coon. Longmans, Green and Company. \$3.

MR. COON'S subtitle reads “What the great American philanthropic foundations do with their money,” and this phrase is an accurate description of the contents of his essay. The title “Money to Burn” has almost no specified meaning, and is merely another example of how an author may write a book for one purpose and select its title for quite another purpose. There is nothing extravagant about Mr. Coon's facts, his contentions, or his interpretations regarding the way foundations use their money. The total amount appropriated by foundations in each calendar year is not large. I doubt whether it has ever gone beyond one hundred million dollars even when amounts donated by those foundations which appear to operate in semi-secrecy are included. One-tenth of a billion dollars is a comparatively small amount of money in these days. But the problem of philanthropic foundations is important regardless of the comparative size of their capital funds or their disbursements. Mr. Coon's book indicates where this importance lies, and his essay is by all odds the most comprehensive treatment of this problem which has thus far found its way into print.

Why, if the quantitative factor is waived, are foundations important? A complete answer to this query would constitute a critique of American society, and consequently I shall select only a few items for special emphasis. In the first place, foundations and their expenditures reveal something of the quality of mind of the great accumulators of wealth. It is important to know how Messrs. Rockefeller, Carnegie, Russell Sage, Duke, Milbank, Rosenwald, Harkness, Davidson, Filene, Baker, et cetera, have acquired their fortunes, but it is much more important to know what conception of social value dominates their minds. If one disagrees with their interpretation of American life and its underlying values, one

does not thereupon raise a personal issue with any of these gentlemen, nor does one resort to the childlike procedure of personal blame-fixing. On the contrary, one assumes, as does Mr. Coon in most instances, that these men are the products of a complex national economy, and that consequently if this economy remains what it is, there will always be men who will interpret life and values in their manner.

In the second place, foundations are important because of their direct and indirect influence upon the policies of educational, social, and religious institutions. The amount which the foundations may contribute to these agencies may be small in comparison with total budgets, but the foundations' appropriation is not scattered; it is an aggregate and it invariably arrives at a strategic moment. Also, foundations make a practice of contributing, not to the whole program of an institution, but rather to a selected fraction which represents the foundations' interests. In this manner foundations exercise an influence upon these agencies which is far out of proportion to the size of their contributions.

Foundations are important, in the third place, because many critics, among them Mr. Coon, appear to believe that they constitute an undemocratic “lump” in American society. To claim the right of doing what one pleases with vast accumulations of surplus wealth which could only have been produced by the labors of many persons seems to these critics to be an unjustifiable presumption. If these large surplus accumulations are to be allowed to continue, so say the critics, then the disposition of such funds should be made through taxation and governmental programs of public welfare, or the foundations should submit to democratic methods of control. Still another of the undemocratic consequences of foundations results from the fact that they so largely control social and economic research. Those who believe in democracy assume that one of its basic necessities is free access to relevant facts, but this cannot be the case if the major research undertakings depend upon foundation grants.

These three spheres of importance do not by any means exhaust the tabulation of reasons which should impel serious students of American society to give attention to philanthropic foundations. As intimated at the outset of this review, anyone who attempts to understand these American foundations and their role will find himself wrestling with the deeper paradoxes of American culture. When, as in the case of Mr. Coon, he discovers how much good has been done by foundation grants, especially in the field of health, he will find clear-cut judgments difficult to make. Mr. Coon, who is certainly one of the severest critics of foundations, their donors, and their executives, closes his essay with a paragraph which begins thus, “There is no point in trying to pass a moral judgment on foundations.” And the paragraph ends with this sentence, “It is, in short, a question for public opinion to decide.”

Mr. Coon's book should then be viewed in the light of these two summary questions. He is occupied first of all with presenting to the public the essential facts about the larger foundations, and in this respect his performance is excellent in spite of his obvious bias. He offers no proposals for the future control of foundations, although he assumes that they will increase in numbers and influence. He believes that foundations represent primarily a device for protecting

the privileges of the rich or for evading taxation. Mixed with these two incentives are valid intentions of doing good, and in spite of the suspected motives much real good results. This conclusion may seem to some readers to be equivocal because it appears to say that good ends justify their means, but as a fellow-inquirer in this area of mixed motivations, I ask such readers to suspend judgment and read Mr. Coon's essay in the mood which he suggests, namely, as a prelude to a more enlightened public opinion.

EDUARD C. LINDEMAN

Shorter Notices

THE CARNIVAL. By Frederic Prokosch. Harper and Brothers. \$2.

In one of his stanzas Frederic Prokosch writes:

And so on this windless morning, forgive,
Lord, my superfluous words and narcissus
Athletics. Hunger, control, the Eye, and the endless
Longing to love and discern: let these be my power.

Perhaps the Lord will forgive him, but there is no apparent reason why critics should. He is so completely a literary poet, facile to no end, without any clear vision, and certainly without any distinction or originality of style, that one can only put him down as decadent and romantic. In poem after poem he has a chance to be something else than narcissist, but he remains that and nothing more. The sad young man on the flying trapeze of rhythm and rhyme is anything but unique today. And consider this approach to the modern world:

The burglars in the prison
And the beggars in the park
Drew their arms across their faces
And cried into the dark
"O love whom you wish, no matter,
Love is a silver stream
That leaps and finally wastes away
On the wrinkled sands of dream!"

Every phrase is trite, an echo of a vague, decadent romanticism—with the sound but not the significance of poetry.

THE OLD CENTURY. AND SEVEN MORE YEARS. By Siegfried Sassoon. The Viking Press. \$2.75.

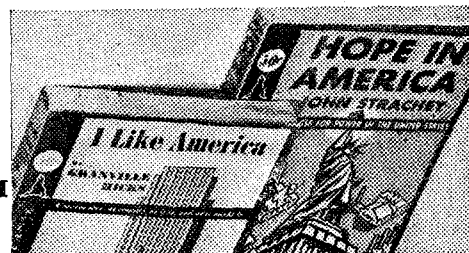
For a young English aristocrat the Edwardian period must have been one of the nicest if not the best of all possible worlds. In "The Old Century," the first volume of his autobiography, Siegfried Sassoon writes the mellow story of a good boy, a happy society, a fortunate era. Was it all really, the author somewhat uneasily asks, so amiably experienced? "And I feel the unbending visages of the realists reproving me for failing to imitate their awful and astringent example." Confronted by an attitude so disarming, a polished craft, a sensitive if not always a strong artist, one cannot quite level criticism at this pleasant garden of English sensibility. To complain about "The Old Century"—with its horses, tutors, and cricket matches, its pre-Raphaelite paintings and distinguished family connections—would be to display ourselves as strangers at a literary banquet which is, in fact, beautifully served. Yet such a stranger at such a banquet,

MODERN AGE

OFFERS THE BOOKS OF THE
DAY AT A PRICE YOU CAN PAY



50c
EACH



1. HOPE IN AMERICA

by John Strachey. They wouldn't let him talk, but you can still read his study of the struggle for power in the U. S. "Thousands of people will want to read it."—*N. Y. Times.* 50¢

2. SCHOOL FOR BARBARIANS

by Erika Mann. Thomas Mann's daughter tells the frightful facts about education under the Nazis and what it is doing to Germany's children. "Sensational but documented."—*Time.* Introduction by Thomas Mann. 50¢

3. I LIKE AMERICA

by Granville Hicks. A native sees the country he loves as it is, and as it might be. A moving and thoughtful book. "Should be read by student, politician and housewife—regardless of political creed."—*St. Louis Post-Dispatch.* 50¢

4. ONE-FIFTH OF MANKIND

by Anna Louise Strong. The story of China's heroic struggle for freedom. "The best short account of the war in China to date."—*Book-of-the-Month Club News.* 50¢

75c
EACH



5. LIFE INSURANCE: Investing in Disaster

by Mort and E. A. Gilbert. It tells what's wrong with the insurance racket and what you can do about it. Introduction by Arthur Kallet. 75¢

6. JAPANESE TERROR IN CHINA

by H. J. Timperley. Not an atrocity tale but the authentic documented accounts of neutral eyewitnesses who reveal in the day by day accounts of rape, robbery, murder, the meaning of modern war. 75¢

7. SPECIAL
95c

For the use of medical and allied professions only

PRACTICAL BIRTH-CONTROL METHODS

by Norman E. Himes, Ph.D. A practical manual prepared with the medical collaboration of Dr. Abraham Stone. Introduction by R. L. Dickinson. Foreword by Havelock Ellis. 95¢

FREE EXAMINATION: If you aren't delighted with these books you can return them within 5 days for a full refund.

MODERN AGE, 432 Fourth Ave., N. Y.

Please send me the books encircled below:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Name

Address

☐ I enclose. (10¢ extra per book for shipping.)
☐ Send me a complete list of books.

N2

might he not mutter to himself that this meal is mostly appetizer and dessert? Lacking the vitality and wit which distinguish the best of his previous work, Mr. Sassoon's new book is almost too unassuming. Appearing so sedately and politely amid our other contemporary chronicles of turbulent adolescence, "The Old Century" reminds us of nothing so much as Mr. Pinkerton among the young Lonigans.

THE SILVER BRANCH. By Seán O'Faoláin. Viking Press. \$2.

"These fifty-odd poems"—drawn from Irish medieval literature—"are but a tiny proportion of masses of technically admirable but otherwise inconceivably dull, dish-waterish drivel such as can have pleased no one but the pedants," says Seán O'Faoláin in a brief but leisurely introduction. They were a product of the bardic schools where poets underwent a training of from five to fifteen years; and by their quiet intimacy they overturn a good many theories. Surely such poetry, so rich, so secure, must have come from a broad movement; it didn't. Schooling must have killed the poetic impulse altogether, particularly since the poems were concerned mainly with nature, but the impulse survived. Seán O'Faoláin says that this was the first poetry west of the Danube to treat of nature as a friend, and he contrasts its objective qualities with the broad symbolism of English verse. The argument might be carried farther, but no one will contend against such poems as *The Sleep Song of Diarmuid* or *The Blackbird of Derrycairn* or the sequence on *Sweeney the Mad*, which makes a miniature cycle. This is not a bold but a tempered poetry, achieving its effect syllable by soft syllable without apparent effort, sturdy, dramatic even, yet undramatized in the conscious, heroic modes.

DRAMA

Cucumber Sandwiches

"THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST" has reached that dangerous age at which literary works are unmistakably outmoded without having become, so far at least, unquestionable classics. It has, however, just received an elaborate revival at the Vanderbilt Theater, and it survives the test rather remarkably well. The audience was not—if I am any judge—an audience of literary historians, and it sat rather dubious through the opening scene during which Algernon and Jack exchange epigrams. But before the evening was over, it was laughing that laugh of pleasure which is so easily distinguishable from the laugh of those who are performing their cultural duties. And that, after all, is the test.

Estelle Winwood, who plays Lady Bracknell and who staged the piece, seems to have approached her job with a clear perception of what the difficulties are. On the whole, the epigrams may be left to look after themselves, since time has tarnished them remarkably little. But the danger is that a modern audience may disallow even the slender

claims which "The Importance of Being Earnest" makes to being a play, and that it will become no more than a series of bright remarks. If it is to be saved from this fate, it must be given an artificial style; but if it is also to be saved from another and worse fate, this style must be recognized as one inherent in the play itself, not one imposed in condescension by a modern director.

One cannot, in other words, successfully play it as a period piece. Oscar Wilde is "sophisticated" or nothing. He cannot be made quaint and survive; any tendency to laugh at rather than with him is utterly fatal; any silliness must be obviously the kind of silliness he intended. For all of these reasons there are dangers inherent in giving the play in the costumes of the period, and I was, in fact, seriously alarmed when the first full-bodied laugh of the evening was won by the riotous pattern of the trousers assigned to Clifton Webb in the role of Jack. That way, I said, lies disaster. But that way is not followed; there is no attempt to spoof the play; and it gets its effects by remaining what the author intended—a "smart" fantasy which provides its precious dandies with the only kind of world in which they could successfully function.

Wilde played at being a socialist. "The Importance of Being Earnest" is fantasy rather than satire in the graver meaning of the term because Wilde, like Congreve before him, had a sneaking admiration for the dandies whom he ridiculed, and infinitely preferred such irresponsible exquisites to dull though useful citizens. The fact, nevertheless, remains that the charm of his fools and the charm of all the dandies from Congreve on is subject to an economic interpretation. The privilege which they enjoy of "treating serious things trivially and trivial things seriously" is the result of the enviable freedom which their security confers upon them. If (*pace* Veblen) one wears gloves to indicate that one does not have to work, one talks nonsense to prove that one does not even have to think. Wilde's greatest achievement in this particular play consists in his perfect imaginative realization of the ideal toward which the fashionable exquisite is tending and his creation of a realm in which his dandies can flutter through life successfully.

If this seems no very difficult achievement, try to remember other comedies in which the trick has been turned with complete success. I can remember but one successful play since Wilde's time which belongs to exactly the same genre—Benn Levy's "Springtime for Henry." And that reminds me that though the present production is rather remarkably well played by Miss Winwood, Mr. Webb, Hope Williams, Derek Williams, and Florence McGee, I still cherish a desire born at the performance of "Springtime for Henry." I should like to see Nigel Bruce, as Jack, playing opposite Romney Brent, as Algernon.

"Dear Octopus" (Broadhurst Theater) is a spacious, rambling, and somewhat drafty family play by Dodie Smith, the Englishwoman who was responsible for the highly successful "Call It a Day" of a few seasons back. That play, it will be remembered, held its episodes together by assuming that each was participated in by a member of a family which had been struck all of a sudden by the awakening of spring. "Dear Octopus" is also about a family, but this

time the three generations of its members gather for a golden-wedding celebration and stay long enough to give everybody a glimpse of their history as well as to reveal their characters. Nothing is so very different from what one would anticipate. For instance, one of the daughters has grown fat and motherly, one has been living uncomfortably with a married man who cannot get a divorce, and one has got a bit neurotic by devoting herself too whole-heartedly to a career. Neither is the thesis very surprising, since it boils down to the contention that if families are not quite what they used to be they haven't changed so very much after all. The play is, nevertheless, entertaining enough provided one is in the mood for a tranquil evening, and it is well acted by a large cast of well-known players, among whom the most striking is certainly Lucille Watson as the bossy but sensible matriarch. Lillian Gish is also well cast as a mousy "companion" to the old lady and gets in the end a proposal of marriage from a bachelor son—to the great surprise of no one except the young man himself.

JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH

RECORDS

IF YOU approach the Columbia record (\$1.50) of an excerpt from Berlioz's "Childhood of Christ" with the accepted notion of Berlioz as a sensation-monger who used noise to cover up melodic sterility, you will be surprised by the delicacy of this music, the rich, sustained flow of what is not the less melody for being highly individual in the way that Berlioz's musical thought is. The playing of the Paris Symphony and the singing of Planel under Ruhlmann are excellent (someone who knows the work very well has pointed out that the two allelujas sung at the end by Planel should be sung by chorus); and the record is accompanied, as every single record should be, by a little sheet with an English translation of the text, but without the original French that should have been given as well.

A few Victor single records are also noteworthy. One (\$2) gives Toscanini's delightful performance with the B. B. C. Symphony of Rossini's Overture to "La Scala di Seta," which falls considerably short of his miraculous performance with the New York Philharmonic. Another (\$1.50) gives Mozart's youthful Overture to "La Finta Giardiniera," in which there is the same extraordinary rush and impact as in the youthful letters I referred to in my review of Turner's book, and which is well done by the Vienna Philharmonic under Walter, with the mature but less interesting Overture to "Titus" on the reverse side. Then there is a version (\$2) of that soprano's battle-horse, "Ozean, du Ungeheuer!" from "Oberon," which acquires distinction from the way it is done—the superb playing of the Philadelphia Orchestra under Ormandy in support of the singing of Flagstad, whose musical feeling and taste are as impressive as ever, and whose voice is still remarkable though not what it was. Play one of her first records—e. g., the finale of "Tristan"; and though it does not fully reproduce the splendor of the voice of four years ago it will enable you to hear in the record of "Oberon"

FAULKNER'S

most startling theme — and
his most interesting heroine

The WILD PALMS

By William Faulkner

This is the story of two lovers who traded grief for the memory of flesh, and regretted no part of their bargain. Charlotte's story may shock a few people, for its unusual theme as well as its honest language, but it will be greeted by most readers as the first clarion statement of the world's epidemic of lovelessness. Faulkner tells this powerful story against another which interlocks with it in theme—that of a convict swept free of a prison camp by flood, struggling to get back to the "safety" of prison walls and so rejecting women and freedom alike. "The impact is terrific."—*John Chamberlain*, in *Harper's*. 340 pages, \$2.50

The BEST SHORT PLAYS of the SOCIAL THEATRE

Edited, with an Introduction

By William Kozlenko

The complete and unabridged texts of ten important plays: *Waiting for Lefty*, *Bury the Dead*, *Hymn to the Rising Sun*, *The Cradle Will Rock*, *Private Hicks*, *Plant in the Sun*, *This Earth Is Ours*, *Give All Thy Terrors to the Wind*, *Running Dogs*, *The Dog Beneath the Skin*. 456 pages, \$2.50.

Just Published

THE MAN WHO KILLED LINCOLN

The Story of John Wilkes Booth

By Philip Van Doren Stern

Mr. Stern treats the story of Booth not merely as history, but as drama—and as a study in the psychology of murder. The result is grand, exciting reading. 384 pages, \$3.00.

Now in its FIFTH printing

MAN'S HOPE

By André Malraux

is the outstanding WAR NOVEL of a generation. It is selling at the rate of nearly a thousand copies a week. \$2.50.

RANDOM HOUSE 20 E. 57 St., N.Y.



If Plato were alive what would he have to say about today's problems?

PLATO TODAY

By R. H. S. CROSSMAN

The teachings of Plato have never ceased to interest intelligent men and women, primarily because the very questions which interested him are to a great extent still alive today. The author has taken Plato's teachings and applied them directly to today's political gospels and leaders: Democracy, American Politics and Education, Fascism, Communism, Roosevelt, Lenin, Hitler, Stalin, etc. The result is a most stimulating and thought-provoking volume. \$2.50

THE MEDITERRANEAN IN POLITICS

By ELIZABETH MONROE

Is the Mediterranean rapidly becoming Europe's next danger point? Who wants what? Why? This volume, not so much a history of the relations of the great European powers, as a survey of the motives which determine their policies, will enable every reader to read behind the lines in today's news. \$2.50

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS
114 FIFTH AVENUE NEW YORK

2nd Annual Dance for Spain
MECCA TEMPLE
133 West 55th St.
SUNDAY Eve. at 8:15, Feb. 5th

Maria GAMBARELLI
MARTHA GRAHAM
Doris HUMPHREY-WEIDMAN and
Chas. THALIA MARA
Arthur MAHONEY and ANTONITA
JUAN MARTINEZ & EDWIN MICHAELS of "Pinocchio"
HAL LEROY ANNA SOKOLOV TAMIRIS
FELICIA SOREL'S "Railroad Dance"
from Marc Connelly's play "Everywhere I Roam"

Tickets: \$2.20 \$1.65 \$1.10 85c 55c Box Seats \$5.50

at American Dance Association, 1565 B'way (46th St.)
Med. Bur. & No. American Committee, 381 4th Ave. (37th St.)
Workers Bookshop, 50 East 13th Street, Leblancs.
B'way at 42nd Street and all University Bookshops

Sponsored by American Dance Association
Benefit MEDICAL BUREAU & NORTH AMERICAN
COMMITTEE TO AID SPANISH DEMOCRACY

NOW you may order BOOKS from THE NATION

At the request of many readers who reside in communities in which no bookshop has been established, *The Nation* now offers to deliver any book to your door at the regular publisher's price (postfree) providing payment is received with the order or publisher's price plus postage if sent C. O. D.

Please address your orders to

THE READERS' SERVICE DIVISION

The Nation • 20 Vesey Street • New York

how much that voice has lost through the excessive use it has been subjected to by managers' greed and Flagstad's recklessness—such things as the four Wagner performances in seven days, the three in three days, as compared with the two performances a week that Caruso never exceeded.

In Strauss's *Symphonia Domestica*—and in the brilliant recording by the Philadelphia Orchestra under Ormandy (five records, \$10)—one has dazzling evidence of the prodigious technical powers which, after "Don Quixote," continued undiminished while the quality of the musical thinking they served deteriorated in appalling fashion. In contrast to this decay clothed in luxuriance is sterility clothing itself in the liveliness and other mere externals of inner vitality: Hindemith's String Quartet Opus 22, well played by the Coolidge Quartet (three records, \$6.50). And in contrast to both works, in its charmingly melodious expression of genuine feeling, is Smetana's "Die Moldau," of which Victor issues a new recording in a set (three records, \$5) with "From Bohemia's Meadows and Fields," another beautiful work from the same symphonic cycle. The performances are by the excellent Czech Philharmonic, conducted not too effectively by Rafael Kubelik.

The new Victor set of "La Bohème" (two volumes, \$19.50) gives you Gigli, with iron replacing the velvet that is gone from his voice; it gives you the acidulous Mimi and Musetta you are likely to hear nowadays, and a good Marcello; it gives you a performance with no style other than the mannerisms of Italian singers uncontrolled by a Toscanini. Or even a Beecham, whose version of Act IV not only is better sung and played but bears the impress of a distinguished and forceful musical intelligence. The brilliant dances from Falla's "Three-Cornered Hat" are brilliantly played by the Boston "Pops" Orchestra under Fiedler (two records, \$2.50); Cortot does a good job with Liszt's "St. Francis Walking on the Water" (\$2), which I find a negligible work; and Elisabeth Schumann's singing of passages from "Hänsel and Gretel" (\$1.50) is charming. As for Hertha Glatz, her contralto is not one of great sensuous beauty, but its limitations are less apparent in Schubert's "Frühlings- Traum," which she sings with greater taste and restraint than his "Gretchen am Spinnrade" (\$2).

Even the early arranged portion of the Benny Goodman Orchestra's performance of "My Honey's Lovin' Arms" (Victor) is delightful in pace and style (except for the meaningless and irritating staccato interjections by the brass that are part of the Goodman formula); and in the second half good solos by Goodman (particularly his second entrance) and Bud Freeman lead into an extended development of the tune by Stacy that becomes exciting as his invention becomes richer and more intricate. And "Farewell Blues" on the reverse side has a fine solo by Goodman. Altogether it is an outstanding record; and another that is quite good offers performances of "Louise" and "It Had to Be You."

Stacy's emotional soundness and health and rich imagination are to be enjoyed in his solos in Commodore's "Swingin' Without Mezz" and—on another record—"Blue Room" and "Exactly Like You"; but with them is too much playing by Freeman—straining improvisation by a man without ideas. Very fine is Commodore's "Three Keyboards," with Stacy, Willie Smith, and Joe Bushkin.

B. H. HAGGIN

Letters to the Editors

Lift the Embargo—or Else

Dear Sirs: At a moment when all Spain is making the supreme effort for the defense of its integrity, it seems incredible that its friends in the United States should deliberately make its sacrifices futile. Yet this is happening—and it seems impossible to stop it.

Lifting the embargo in the United States is the key to the defeat of fascism in Spain. By itself, this single act will enable the Loyalists to neutralize Franco's great superiority in airplanes and armaments. Nothing else will do the trick.

For a variety of reason the White House has been the main force in inspiring and continuing the embargo. It was a special Presidential message to Congress that evoked the almost unanimous approval of the Embargo Act of January, 1937; the embargo was continued in force through the Administration-sponsored Neutrality Act of May 1, 1937; finally, when an aroused America demanded the lifting of the embargo in May of 1938, the entire campaign was smashed by Secretary Hull's letter to Senator Pittman demanding that the embargo be continued.

Any campaign to lift the embargo must face these facts and be guided by them. Rockwell Kent summed up the situation bluntly at the Washington Conference to Lift the Embargo when he declared that it was about time that the advocates of lifting the embargo announced that, unless action was forthcoming, the support they had given to the Administration would be withdrawn.

Nothing like this has been done. From those strange friends of Spain who have their axes to grind comes the hysterical cry, "We must not embarrass the President! The President will lift the embargo; let us not embarrass him!" Let us be honest enough to recognize that a "Lift the Embargo" campaign conducted with the idea of exerting real pressure and forcing action from the White House will embarrass the President only if he does not intend to lift the embargo. Let us be honest enough to recognize that we are sacrificing the Spanish people so that we may not "embarrass the President."

SAMUEL ROMER

New York, January 18

Good News

Dear Sirs: It is not often that I write in to *The Nation*, and still less often that I find occasion to write in a festive or happy mood concerning any event of importance, but I know you will not mind my rejoicing with you over the freedom of Tom Mooney. Indeed, there has been such a succession of good news—Frankfurter, Governor Murphy, the President's utterances about the *Boches*, and now Mooney—that a belief in Santa Claus is entirely justified.

The Nation has played a big part in this happy ending to the Mooney story—your many articles have carried proofs of his innocence that have been the basis of thousands of arguments on the part of your readers, and have been responsible for much of the money contributed to the cause. It affects me, personally to the extent that I shall now enjoy a visit to California, having long ago sworn never to set foot in the state so long as Mooney was in prison.

It is gratifying to read in the kept press of this country that not once is the least question raised of any possibility that Mooney might have been guilty, and even the Paris edition of the *New York Herald Tribune* gave him the first three columns of its front page.

Let me take this opportunity to wish *The Nation* a very happy and influential New Year. I have been with you for many years now, and I have yet to see you on the wrong side of any question.

C. C.

Newcastle-on-Tyne, England, January 9

Obituary of a Jew

Dear Sirs: The Italian publisher, A. F. Formigini, committed suicide on December 1 last by leaping from the Ghirlandina tower of his native city, Modena. In his pockets were found 30,000 lire, which he bequeathed to the poor, and several notes of biting irony against the regime.

Formigini was never a conformist. A man of independent spirit, a humanist whose smiling skepticism concealed a frank and often ingenuous goodness, it was inevitable that he should clash with the regime's intolerance and corruption. All his editorial enterprises, aiming at the defense and elevation of Italian culture, found in fascism either

open opposition or insidious resistance. From his "Chi è?" the Italian "Who's Who," he was ordered to suppress the name of anyone whom fascism considered *persona non grata*. Several volumes of his collections of literary studies, "Profili," were removed from circulation. Publication of *L' Italia che scrive*, Italy's outstanding bibliographical magazine, which he founded in 1918, was made increasingly difficult.

Although all this had embittered him, he was not completely disheartened. The crowning blow came with the anti-Semitic campaign, the artificial character and ignoble baseness of which filled him with revolt.

His death was a protest against the senseless brutality of racial persecution. But no newspaper dared to print the news of his death, for the names of Jews, even in obituary notices, must no longer contaminate the columns of the Fascist press.

MICHELE CANTARELLA

MAX SALVADORI

Northampton, Mass., January 17

Seldes vs. Villard

Dear Sirs: The same conspiracy of silence which followed the publication of Mr. Sinclair's "Brass Check" in 1920 follows my "Lords of the Press." Of the more than a hundred big papers criticized only one has published a fair review, and only two or three have mentioned the book in terms of abuse, self-defense, or evasion. On the other hand, a hundred of more liberal-left-labor publications have published fair and honest reviews.

Mr. Villard's review in *The Nation* (January 7) is more puzzling to me than the silence of the big press or the praise of the liberal press. It does not make sense. It consists of three paragraphs. The "lead," in which Mr. Villard expresses "disappointment" and cites the case of David Stern and the November, 1938, Pennsylvania elections, is obviously unfair, if not ridiculous. The book was in *The Nation's* office before November 1; it had been completed in August, and although Mr. Villard mentions the probability of it having gone to press before the election, he still in the main part of his review deals with an episode which occurred after it. Is this fair newspaper

work? Incidentally he says the book "is composed in part of articles contributed to magazines." This is not accurate. The two chapters on Scripps-Howard are different from my *New Republic* article; the Treason on the *Times* chapter is double the magazine article; the Journalistic Noblesse chapter, which appeared in *The Nation*, has a new beginning.

Paragraph 2 accuses me of using the attitude of the press to the New Deal as a measure of liberalism and reaction. This is not quite so. The book states that the press has attacked every liberal, progressive, and reform measure, and especially every law and idea which might reduce its cash profits. The New Deal is one example; there are many others. The cockeyed quotation in this paragraph is from the Baltimore *Sun* although in the review it appears to be mine. Mr. Villard complains that there is no factual description of the collapse of the Hearst chain. Hearst was held down to a short chapter because he has been overdone in the magazines. Mr. Villard says he missed the story of the "marked decline of the Scripps-Howard dailies." He should have read the two chapters, pages 76 to 103, the longest single subject in the book.

In paragraph 3 Mr. Villard quotes me as saying that my ten tests of a free press came "on the spur of the moment" and suggests that others "might suggest themselves after more deliberation." Why did not Mr. Villard continue reading down to the bottom of page 388, to this paragraph: "The following tests of a free press have been suggested by newspapermen, editors, and school-of-journalism professors who have read this manuscript"? There follow five more tests of a free press. A score of notable persons in journalism contributed to this chapter, and a hundred newspapermen helped supply the book's stories, facts, and documentation. Mr. Villard's remark about "more tests after more deliberation" is so unfair that he should apologize or explain.

GEORGE SELDES

New York, January 16

Dear Sirs: I am sorry to have puzzled and disappointed Mr. Seldes, whose studies of the American press I value highly and have often praised, but I cannot alter my review. I even dissent from his new charge that the entire press "has attacked every liberal, progressive, and reform measure . . . which might reduce its cash profits." There are fine exceptions. I did read the pages he

cites. That "scores" aided him does not change my opinion that more tests of a newspaper could be worked out after further study.

OSWALD GARRISON VILLARD

New York, January 18

Dr. Langford's Advice

Dear Sirs: In a letter published in your issue of January 14 Professor John L. Childs says: "Dr. Langford publicly admits I was asked to discuss union problems [meaning problems of the Teachers' Union—H. D. L.] with Mr. Earl Browder and Mr. Clarence Hathaway." I have nowhere admitted any such position; I have never stated it or held it, either publicly or privately.

In view of Professor Childs's reiterated personal attack I am obliged to restate the gist of my conversations with him, in order to clarify my position beyond the possibility of misinterpretation. It should be made clear from the start that in my conversations with Professor Childs I was not acting as the official representative or envoy of any group, but as a private individual, engaging in a friendly conversation.

Categorically, I did not say or imply to Professor Childs (contrary to his statement in the New York *Post* of December 29) that a "factional bloc" existed in the Columbia chapter of the Teachers' Union. Secondly, I did not ask him to discuss Teachers' Union problems with the Communist leaders. I did suggest to Professor Childs that since he had questions as to how Communists work in trade unions generally, the best way to clear up his doubts would be to go to original sources, just as someone seeking authoritative information about the Republican Party might be directed to Hamilton or Hoover.

I neither stated nor implied that Professor Childs should discuss Teachers' Union affairs with Mr. Browder and Mr. Hathaway.

HOWARD D. LANGFORD

New York, January 16

Excitement in Vermont

Dear Sirs: Much excitement is raging here in Montpelier, and doubtlessly throughout the electric-power industry of the state, over the prospect of a flood-control dam being constructed by the federal government within the bounds of this state that might be utilized to produce electric power for public consumption. I can see no real cause for

excitement other than that such a piece of engineering might slightly lessen the income of the Green Mountain Power Corporation, a subsidy of the New England Power Corporation.

If the government can build a flood-control hydroelectric structure in this state, or any other, and obtain efficiency in both these directions; sell the electricity produced at one-third to one-fifth what we now pay for it; and make the enterprise pay for itself in a few years—well, to me it is inconceivable that an intelligent person would object.

They did it in the Tennessee Valley—why can't it be done here? The real trouble is that "certain ones" are afraid it *will* be done here.

RICHARD W. CRANE

Montpelier, Vt., January 19

CONTRIBUTORS

ROBERT S. ALLEN is coauthor with Drew Pearson of the syndicated newspaper column Washington Merry-Go-Round.

ELIOT JANEWAY has just completed a survey of manufacturers and industries doing business in war supplies.

GENEVIEVE TABOUIS is a well-known French newspaperwoman.

REINHOLD NIEBUHR is the author of "Reflections on the End of an Era" and "Beyond Tragedy."

McALISTER COLEMAN is a New Jersey journalist.

LOUISE BOGAN is the poetry critic of the *New Yorker*.

MICHAEL M. DAVIS is chairman of the Committee on Research in Medical Economics.

HAROLD J. LASKI, on leave from the London School of Economics, is teaching at the University of Washington.

H. B. PARKES is a member of the History Department of New York University.

EDUARD C. LINDEMAN is the author of "Wealth and Culture."

INFORMATION FOR SUBSCRIBERS

THE NATION, 20 Vesey St., New York. Price, 15 cents a copy. By subscription—Domestic: One year \$5; Two years \$8; Three years \$11. Additional Postage per year: Foreign, \$1; Canadian, 50 cents. The Nation is indexed in Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature, Book Review Digest, Dramatic Index, Index to Labor Periodicals, Public Affairs, Information Service. Two weeks' notice and the old address as well as the new are required for change of address.